

FIRESIDE

UPDATE

A member benefit of MidStates HPBA

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What Are Consumers Telling Us?

A panel of MSHPBA members interprets the hearth survey results

Rachel Plumb, Winning Formula Communications

Did you know that almost two out of every three fireplace owners use their fireplaces mainly for atmosphere while eight out of 10 stove owners use their stove for heat? Or that 50 percent of consumers who plan to build a home in the next year or two and currently live in residences without a fireplace say they would likely have a hearth appliance in their future home?

Neither did we. That is, not until the results of the HPBA Fireplace and Freestanding Stove Usage and Attitude Study were recently released. The Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association polled some 6,780 households throughout the United States about their use of hearth products and perceptions about them. The study was intended to provide members of the association with data to further define their marketing and product development strategies and help firms increase revenues, boost market share, develop more appropriate products and improve their bottom line.

Did the study meet its objective? To find out, we asked a panel of our affiliate members their opinion about the survey results. Here's what a retailer, a manufacturer and a distributor with the MidStates Hearth Patio & Barbecue Association had to say.

MEET OUR PANEL

Retailer

Tom Stegman
Vice President, Patio & Hearth
Dayton, Columbus and
Cincinnati, Ohio

Manufacturer

Curtis Overstake
Wholesale Marketing Manager,
Columbus Wood Products
Columbus, Ohio

Distributor

Trent Scholler
President and Owner,
MS Distributors
Toledo, Columbus and Cincinnati,
Ohio; Detroit, Michigan

Do you find this research to be a useful source of consumer information?

Overstake: I do. I think it addresses the questions of who, what, when, where and why regarding fireplace usage. And it does go into detail on the hearth product marketplace so we can make sure we're catering to the needs of the end users.

Scholler: It wasn't specific enough. It was too vague and general. It basically scratches the surface and tells us common-sense answers that we already know.

Stegman: Very much so. In fact, we'll make this information mandatory reading

for all of our sales associates so they have a better understanding of the trends in the industry. It was certainly good

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Mystery Shopping *Coming Soon To A Store Near You...*

The MidState's Affiliate is proud to launch the Mystery Shopper program this summer. All members who attend the Annual Meeting will receive this service at no additional cost as an added benefit of membership.

"As a retailer in the hearth industry for 22 years, and as a retail consultant specializing in customer relationship management, the mystery shopper program offers an excellent benefit to HPBA affiliate members. Customer relationships are vital in today's difficult retail environment, and knowing what works and what doesn't is invaluable information for the hearth retailer."

— Carrie Swan, Black Swan Hearth & Gift, Newton, CT.

Why should you sign up for Mystery Shopping?

- Mystery shopping is an ideal way for you to learn how your store compares to your competitors!
- Your stores appearance and employees are important because you never get a second chance to make a first impression!
- An independent firm has been hired by the MSHPBA to audit the evaluations and provide individual store results in comparison to others in the region and nationally!

Details will be available at the conference June 2 in Covington, KY. For more information about the Mystery Shopping program, please call our affiliate office at 314-576-5333.



Pete Anderson, MS Distributors

This is my final time to write to you as your President. At our June Annual Meeting the new officers will be in place. It's been an honor and privilege to contribute in my small way to this organization. Thank you all for your support over the last two years.

I've been very fortunate to have an outstanding Board of Directors to work with. The committees have done great work.

I encourage each of our members to come to the June Annual Meeting in Cincinnati. The sessions will be helpful in running your business and the time to network informally is extremely valuable, especially since the EXPO has become so big. I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

An added benefit of coming to the Annual Meeting for retailers will be the launch of the MSHBPA mystery shopper program at no cost. This incredibly helpful benefit was offered to members in Canada last year, and many members raved about it. Imagine receiving a confidential report looking at the shopping experience through the eyes of one of your customers and then comparing the results to other shops in the region. You must be registered and in attendance to sign up for this program for **FREE!**

See you in Cinci!

CHECK IT OUT!

Logon and visit the new MidStates HPBA Website at www.midstateshpba.org

Find out what's going on in our affiliate:

- Upcoming Events
- Leg/Reg Updates
- Membership Benefits
- Sponsor Information

More to come – stay tuned!

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(Term expiration year in parentheses)

Pete Anderson, President (2005)
MS Distributors
Toledo, OH
Peteanderson@twmi.rr.com

Dan Maddox, Vice President (2004)
Hearth Products Controls Co.
Dayton, OH
maddoxcompany@cs.com

Alan Newkirk, Treasurer (2004)
Stove Parts Unlimited
Mt. Sterling, KY
stoveparts@aol.com

Cherie Clark-Radovic, Secretary (2005)
B&G Fireplace Distributors, Inc.
Canton, OH
cradovic@ameritech.net

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B&G Fireplace Distributors, Inc.
Canton, OH

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Heat Exchange, Inc.
North Ridgeville, OH
admin@heatexchangeonline.com

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Trenton Hearthsides Shop, Inc.
Trenton, MI

Vicki Harrell (2004)
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Owensboro, KY
Backyard94@aol.com

Greg Hill (2003)
Hearthland Sales, Inc.
Uniontown, OH
Ghill26388@aol.com

Nancy Henry (2005)
Towne 'N Country Hardware & Fireplace
Garden City, MI
nanhenry@juno.com

Cindy Seebauer (2003)
Busy Bear Fireplace & Patio Shop
South Euclid, OH
bbfireplace@aol.com



MSHPBA Office Staff

Fireside Update is published quarterly for members of the MSHPBA. Submission of articles is encouraged and welcome. Address correspondence to: burkert@drakeco.com or call 314-576-5333.

*Gina Burkert, Editor;
Cherie Clark-Radovic,
Communications
Chair.*

Rick Dungey
Executive Director
dungey@drakeco.com

Gina Burkert
Program Coordinator
burkert@drakeco.com

HBPA Board Report

Submitted by: Pete Anderson
Region IV Board Representative

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association Board of Directors met on March 4th in Nashville Tennessee.

The Association had a good year financially in 2002 with revenues and expenses slightly over the budgeted amounts as a result of the trade show being a little better than planned for. The HBPA has budgeted for a reduction of revenues of 3% for 2003 from 2002.

The Communications Committee has been working to see that hearth and barbecue receive increased media presence. They increased spending on media relations from \$32,000 to nearly \$75,000 in 2002 and as a result increased exposure from 6.5 million circulation to 43.1 million circulation.

Membership in the Association is at an all time high. Work is being done to offer more value to members. It was reported that members who have switched to the HBPA's merchant card program are able to save ten times their annual dues. HPBA of Canada has offered a mystery shopping service to its members last year and it was praised as an incredibly valuable member benefit. Some Canadian retailers are taking a completely fresh look at how they operate their stores as a result of this program. Don Kaiser, HPBA Director of Affiliate Relations, has contracted with a mystery shopping company based in the U.S. so that affiliates can offer this benefit to their members at a very low per member cost.

Government affairs made a presentation on the online advocacy program. I have used this and recommend our members access this through the HBPA web site and see how very easy it is to be a voice in the national legislative process on issues important to our members.

The HPBA Board of Directors approved a proposed statewide bill for the State of California that would establish "no burn" days and restrict the type of fireplaces that can be installed in new homes. This was done in an attempt to preempt extremely restrictive local ordinances. The City of Fresno has passed ordinances banning all wood burning in new homes.

The Hearth Education Foundation was pleased to report the completion of the NFI pellet certification program.

The Statistics Committee reported their "Top-of-the-Line" Hearth Industry Statistics. If you are interested in this type of information, an executive summary will be available from the affiliate office.

The Trade Show Committee has been securing sites in a
(continued on page 8)



NFI Gas Certification
*Setting the Standard for the
Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Industry!*

**Sunday, June 1, 2003
at the MidStates Annual Meeting
Radisson Hotel Cincinnati
in Covington, Kentucky.**

NFI IS VITAL TO YOUR BUSINESS!

By following recognized standards for certification agencies, the National Fireplace Institute offers exams that reflect best industry practice.

New HEARTH manuals supporting the exams are the most comprehensive in the industry.

The new more comprehensive certifications are designed to gain better recognition by building officials, code officials and the general public.

WHO SHOULD REGISTER?

Installers, sales force, customer service personnel of retailers and installing distributors who want to learn the latest, brush up on skills and get deserved recognition.

CUSTOMERS WILL CHOOSE CERTIFIED PROFESSIONALS FIRST AND FOREMOST!

You must be pre-registered by May 23 to be allowed in the class. The sooner you register, the sooner you will get your study guide.
For a registration form call 314-576-5333.

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How To Protect Your Business From Terror:



Workplace Violence/Safety in America

Timothy A. Dimoff, CEO/President SACS, Consulting and Investigative Services, Inc

Tim Dimoff, a recognized national corporate security, workplace violence, corporate litigation and terrorism expert will be presenting a session titled "Workplace Violence/Safety in America" at the MidStates HPBA Annual Meeting June 1-2 in Covington, KY. Here is a brief outline of some of the important aspects that all corporations, small and large, need to focus on in order to survive in the changing corporate environment. If you are NFI certified, this session will earn you 1 CEU in Safety, Health & Liability.

Adopt a "Protection Attitude" that you didn't have previously:

- Reassess your assumption on how the world works
- There are real threats to your company you were never taught in business school
- Who can improve, solve and maintain your security concerns?
- Put a working evacuation plan in place

Develop a contingency business plan:

- Acts of terror/destruction can affect your business directly or indirectly even if you are not the target
- How do you get paid if Postal Service is shut down?
- How do you receive or deliver goods if infrastructure is destroyed?

Have a plan for a variety of crises:

- Bomb and Fire Evacuation Plans are different
- What about extortion, kidnapping, ransom, traveling, etc.?
- Sloppiness is a serious "RISK"

Control access to your building-make it your priority:

- Controlling building access is important for both real and psychological reasons
- Train your employees, management and security personnel in recognizing and reporting "Red Flags"
- Senior management needs to follow "Security Procedures" and not think they are the exception to the rule

Larger corporations need to disperse your people and other assets:

- Critical technology systems
- Core business assets
- Management and talent
- Develop redundancies of intellectual capital and critical business systems

Embrace new technologies:

- Fingerprint identification, retinal scanners, and thumbprint access systems
- X-ray machines, mail eradication systems, bomb sniffers
- Biometric-based identification (thumbprint & photo cards) will get "EZ Pass" treatment at airports, borders, bridges, major cities, etc.
- Don't rely entirely on technology—People are still the last line of defense

Reevaluate security at facilities outside the United States:

- Especially true for American Companies that represent commercial and cultural dominance such as

- Disney, IBM, McDonald's, Microsoft, Nike, etc.
- Conduct risk analysis in each country and region
- Have a plan for getting your employees out of dangerous situations
- Improve communication with overseas offices and make sure they have good contact with U.S. embassies or consulates and local security officials
- Treat the "local staff" with equal loyalty and respect

Reevaluate travel policies:

- Have good planning and good communication
- Require and stay in constant touch with traveling employees
- Mandate periodic contact with the home office
- Collect the mobile phone numbers and e-mail addresses of all employees

Don't forget internal threats:

- Recognize that the biggest threat may be sitting at one of your company desks or working as one of your laborers
- Disgruntled employees have always had the potential to cause the most damage to a corporation and/or its employees
- Think carefully about "corporate culture" and try to create a "loyalty culture"
- Reexamine all hiring procedures and human-resource policies

Knowledge replaces fear:

- Don't be overcome by fear
- Paralysis is the worse reaction since it could cause you to lose out on new business
- All employees and management need to be kept informed, trained, reminded and updated on all aspects involving security goals

Be Prepared. 🔥

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PEOs Take Load Off Companies by Filling Human Resources Function

Tom Shehan

This article excerpted from the March 14, 2003 print edition of The Houston Business Journal supplied from houston.bizjournals.com

Every week a new survey is published that confirms what business owners already know: benefits are getting more expensive, insurance carriers are becoming more selective and employees are demanding more options. Caught in the middle are employers who must pay for health insurance and other benefits for their employees.

The expertise required to manage the human resources of a business quickly outpaces the experience and training of most entrepreneurs.

Smaller businesses often find it difficult to compete with larger companies and are usually at a disadvantage when it comes to providing competitive benefit packages. Health insurance has become the No. 1 benefit for attracting employees. Few, if any, business owners can afford to provide or administer the same kinds of benefit packages that large companies do.

A 2002 study by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research and Educational Trust found that the majority (almost 75 percent) of businesses with fewer than 50 employees are limited to one choice of health plan, and the percentage only improves slightly for businesses with up to 200 employees. In addition, the benefit programs offered by small businesses are usually limited in their coverage and program options.

An increasing number of business owners have found a solution that enables them to offer competitive employee benefit programs while freeing them from the time-consuming burden of administration, compliance and government reporting—Professional Employer Organizations or PEOs.

Easing the burden

The expertise required to manage the human resources of a business quickly outpaces the experience and training of most entrepreneurs. When an individual first starts a business, "human resources" usually means little more than calculating weekly payroll and preparing paychecks for employees.

As a business grows, the process becomes more complex and involves maintaining payroll records, calculating withholding, producing W-2 forms, quarterly 941s and other tax forms. Add to this the requirements to comply with a myriad of employment laws and regulations and a business owner can easily become consumed by administrative tasks. In fact, the Small Business Administration estimates that business owners spend up to 25 percent of their time handling employee-related paperwork.

These are just some of the reasons more and more business owners are partnering with PEOs to provide professional,

effective human resources and benefit programs for their employees.

PEOs are full-service, human-resources organizations that manage the daily administrative tasks business owners encounter. Business owners and PEOs establish a co-employment relationship and become partners in the management of employees, sharing certain employer responsibilities and liabilities.

While the business retains the day-to-day management of its employees, the PEO assumes many of the human resources responsibilities. A PEO is, in effect, an off-site human resources department that helps to ensure employees have a safe workplace that is operated in compliance with employment laws and regulations.

Negotiating power

A business that forms a relationship with a PEO, gets access to a highly experienced human resources staff, including human resources managers, risk managers, compliance managers and benefits specialists. By providing these services, a PEO enables the business owner to concentrate on growing the business.

While paperwork reduction and time savings are important to running a successful business, a PEO is able to provide even more benefits. To help attract and retain employees, PEOs offer clients competitive advantages. By teaming with a PEO, small and mid-sized businesses can benefit from larger negotiating power and volume discounts. Through a PEO, an employer can offer flexible benefit options that allow employees to have access to retirement savings plans, health-benefit programs and employee assistance programs at an affordable cost.



Company Checklist

- ☐ Payroll
- ☐ EEOC Regulations
- ☐ Quarterly 941s
- ☐ Insurance
- ☐ W-2 Forms
- ☐ 401K
- ☐ SEP IRA
- ☐ Ergonomics Compliance

While business retains the day-to-day management of its employees, the PEO assumes many of the human resources responsibilities.

Workers also have the assurance that their workplace is safe and they are treated fairly. Labor laws and safety regulations often cover workers employed by a PEO that would not have protected them when employed by a small business. Because a PEO has a combined work force of hundreds or thousands, its employees are protected by laws that usually do not apply to smaller work groups.

Achieving business success requires a relentless focus on the basics: core products, services, customers and the bottom line. Using a PEO to handle human resources can help business owners focus on what matters. 🔥

Editor's Note: For more research into PEOs, browse the website of the National Association of Professional Employer Organizations at www.napeo.org.

What Are Consumers Telling Us? (continued from page 1)

that the survey was conducted. I hope this helps some retailers understand their clientele better.

What about the survey results reinforced what you already knew about your customer base?

Overstake: It was a little more detailed. I was not aware of percentages as far as the fireplaces are concerned. The article went into information as far as who uses them, how many homes have the fireplaces, when they use them, how they use them. I basically didn't have all those details.

Scholler: Everything that I already knew has been confirmed. People use their fireplaces more when it's cold. People who have fireplaces don't use them as much as people who have stoves. People who have stoves are more conscious of heat. It didn't give me any information that was any big shocking news to me. It was pretty much all common knowledge.

Stegman: It paralleled the polls we take in our stores when we talk to customers. The sales breakout by percentage into products very closely matches what we see here. Most of our clients are buying gas products because of the ease and convenience of them. That's true and parallels what the survey says.

Was there anything in the survey you found surprising or that contradicted your experience in the industry?

Overstake: No, but my experience is with mantels and the survey talked very little about mantels. Our product is one more of aesthetics and finishing off, whereas fireplace companies are more interested in the convenience and benefits of the fireplace.

Scholler: It's surprising to me how much of a wood-burning business there still is. The wood-burning business is shrinking so drastically in our market that it's interesting to me that it's not so much everywhere else.

Stegman: We sell twice as many gas appliances as wood burning appliances. The article said wood-burning appliances are still No. 1. But you have to remember that a lot of what we're selling – especially in gas logs – is more of a vented gas log that goes into a wood burning fireplace.

Do you feel these results revealed any certain trends in hearth product consumption?

Overstake: The only variation has been a transition from wood- or log-burning masonry fireplaces to pre-manufactured gas fireplaces. We've seen a big shift in that area. The survey results did address those issues – the fact that there are more gas pre-manufactured fireplaces now being distributed and used.

Scholler: The only things that are changing that aren't constants are things like people using more gas.

Stegman: The trend is going the way of more upscale products. Instead of buying just a basic unit, homeowners are upgrading to add more bells and whistles. The

more discerning customer is willing to spend the money to get the look they want, the fire they want to add to the atmosphere. In turn, there's been an upgrade to the aesthetics of what the manufacturers have been putting out, especially over the last five years.

What do these survey results say about the future of your segment of the hearth products industry?

Overstake: We're encouraged with the rise in pre-manufactured fireplaces because it gives us an opportunity to ship pre-manufactured mantels to fit them rather than having them built on site. That saves time on the job.

Scholler: It pointed out that people still enjoy hearth products. And I think people will continue to want some sort of hearth product, whether it's electric, wood or holograms. They like the concept of sitting around a fire.

Stegman: It's even more confirmation that we're on the right track as far as how we're marketing our hearth products.

Is there anything that wasn't covered in the survey that would be useful information for a future consumer hearth product research study?

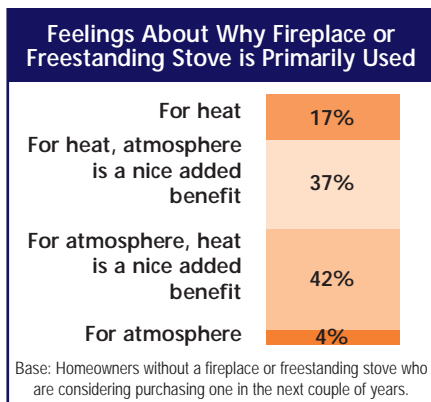
Overstake: We manufacture wood mantels for new home construction and fireplace cabinets for the aftermarket. This mostly was geared to fireplace units, but every fireplace has a mantel whether it's wood, ceramic, some other pre-cast product or stone. Feedback regarding mantel selection for the new home market as well as the aftermarket would be helpful.

Scholler: According to this, basically people who buy hearth products are concerned about heat efficiency. But my builder customer, who buys way more than Mr. and Mrs. Homeowner, only cares how much it costs and whether it will pass a one-year warranty. Home Depot buys a lot of fireplaces, and they probably don't care about heat efficiency either. You have to break the information down into greater detail by homeowner, distributor, builder, etc.

Stegman: Polling the customer about what they expect to spend for a hearth item by category would be helpful. If a customer is buying a wood stove, how much do they think a wood stove is? Or a set of gas logs? It would be interesting to get a census of whether consumers perceive our products to be overpriced, underpriced or just about right. 🔥

Editor's Note: The survey results are available to any company that is an HPBA member. If you wish to receive a copy, call HPBA Director of Market Research Don Johnson at (703) 522-0086. Or, send an e-mail with your request to johnson@hpba.org.

Footnote: We will explore in greater detail some of the results of the survey in a session at the meeting in Covington, KY June 1-2.



How to Market and Sell to Women

WOMEN: THE GROWTH MARKET FOR THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

This article excerpted from the April 4, 2003 edition of "The Winning Edge" an e-mail newsletter supplied from Dr. Kerry Johnson. You can get this e-mail newsletter free by visiting www.kerryjohnson.com.

A lovely housewife, content in the kitchen. She has no desire to compete in the workplace. Her day is spent watching soap operas and talking to friends on the phone. She allows her husband to make all of the major buying decisions. She would rather be told what to buy than make suggestions. This is the new woman of the 21st Century---- NOT.

Instead, she is the driving force in America purchasing 83% of all consumer goods. If your wife buys your underwear, you know what I mean. Is she a stay at home mom? Not likely, although she wants to raise her kids. She is part of the 2/3 of the workforce entering the American job pool. Does she have an affluence or cash on hand? She is part of the 1400 new business starts every day. Does she make expensive purchases? She buys 57% of all cars made in America and 36% of all trucks. Yet most men don't even know how to communicate with, let alone how to market or sell to her.

Women's attitudes, perceptions and aspirations have changed more in the last decade than in any other time in history. They are more likely than men to be the head



of a household in many states. Even in "intact" families, they are involved in 95% of the financial decisions that experts until only recently thought were made by the husband alone. Women are now a force to be reckoned with. They are your biggest and possibly most invisible market. As a salesperson, you will either learn how to sell to them or see your revenues decline drastically.

Oppenheimer Funds past president Barbara Macaskill reported that 82% of the women polled believe they will be solely responsible for their financial well-being sometime in their lives. Yet most salespeople and sales training have long ignored the unique

buying styles and consumer behavior of the 127 million women in the U.S.

HOW TO ATTRACT EARNERS WHO MAKE \$1.5 TRILLION

51% of the earners in America make over \$1.5 Trillion. But few salespeople recognize or seem willing to spend the time learning how to sell them. There are several differences in the buying behavior between males and females. Contrary to popular opinion, women are more likely to avoid risk in making buying decisions than men.

(continued on page 9)

Annual Meeting Committee

We would like to thank the following generous Sponsors:



Total Hearth & Grill, Inc.



Hearthlan Sales, Inc. **D**

Hearth Products Controls

We are currently looking for more Cookout and Burn Unit sponsors for the 2003 Annual Meeting. This is a great opportunity to network with potential customers. Please call Dan Maddox at 937-433-7000 if you are interested in finding out more or if you know of a company who might be interested in sponsoring. To register for the Annual Meeting call (314) 576-5333.

YOUR VOTE COUNTS

Four MidStates HPBA board seats are up for election this year. Take a moment to vote when your ballot arrives. Ballots must be post-marked by **May 19, 2003.**

You Have A Sharp Direct Mail Piece. Now What?

Gregory Demetriou

This article excerpted from americanmail.com, a website devoted to developing and expediting direct mail marketing programs for small-to-medium-sized businesses and organizations that utilize the US Postal Service to reach their markets and audiences.

The answer is simple: recruit a mailhouse, or lettershop, to ensure the cost-effective and timely distribution of your printed materials. A mailhouse focuses on assembling all the elements of a direct mail package and making certain it is delivered to the post office and mailed at the lowest allowable postage.

Ideally, the mailhouse should be consulted at the start of your project, when you're making creative decisions, such as format or envelope size.

Here are four reasons why working with a mailhouse can be your most important direct mail decision:

- **Postal Regulations & Savings.** Postal regulations can be complex, making mailers more vulnerable to paying higher postage simply because they aren't aware of the latest regulations. In many cases, the use of a professional lettershop creates savings in postage alone that can often be enough to pay for production costs.
- **Cost Efficiency.** Because the post office has invested so much in automating its mail processing, it offers significant savings for work sharing, such as bar coding and enhanced carrier routing. That can't be done without professional level software or expertise, which is exactly what a good mailhouse provides.
- **Larger Mailings.** A mailhouse allows business owners to commit to mailing projects larger than they could handle in-house.
- **Time Savings.** A lettershop can produce clients' mailings in a tenth of the time it would take with volunteers or their own personnel. It ensures that the message will get out on time!

When to choose?

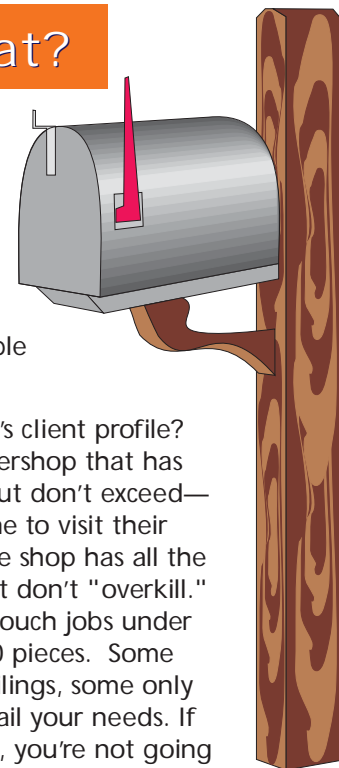
Once you decide it makes good sense to use a mailhouse; it's important to choose the right vendor and to do so as early in the process as possible. Ideally, the mailhouse should be consulted at the start of your project, when you're making creative decisions, such as format or envelope size. These experts can provide up-to-date information on US Postal Service requirements, as well as offer critical tips, such as how to save money by designing an easy-to-assemble package.

How to choose?

Often, choosing the right mailhouse comes down to

chemistry. But, that's just the beginning. By asking these questions, you'll be able to make a sound decision:

- **Do you fit the mailhouse's client profile?** You'll do best with a lettershop that has facilities, which meet—but don't exceed—your needs. Take the time to visit their premises to make sure the shop has all the equipment you need. But don't "overkill." Some mailhouses won't touch jobs under 20,000, 30,000, or 40,000 pieces. Some handle only financial mailings, some only bills and statements. Detail your needs. If you don't fit their profile, you're not going to get the level of service you need.
- **How deep is the staff?** If only one person is going to know what your job entails, and if that person is out, you could miss an important deadline.
- **What's their track record?** If you haven't been recommended by a satisfied customer, ask for client names and call at least two of them.
- **Are they known for proactive, personal service?** A good mailhouse looks at each client's project carefully and offers clients the benefits of its expertise and experience without being asked. You want a vendor to participate in helping you through the process in the most effective, cost-efficient way. 🔥



HPBA Board Report

(continued from page 3)

Central, East, West pattern for the show beyond 2009. The plan for moving the burn area indoors has been abandoned due to expense and concern over approval being withdrawn in a venue when the local political climate changes.

The 2003 Board of Directors voted in the following officers:

Chairman: John Galbreath Jr.

Vice Chairman: John Adams

Secretary: Paul Birnstihl

Treasurer: Steven Magnotti

If any member has questions or comments about the national association I invite them to contact me. 🔥

How to Market and Sell to Women (continued from page 7)



Cold calling seems to be the most useless way to prospect for the biggest source of your future business. Women are more suspicious of non-referred calls and are more skeptical. They are also better able to resist pressure.

HOW TO SELL 51% OF THE POPULATION

Selling to women may require a different mindset. Men often communicate in an effort to reach conclusions and solutions quickly. Women commonly communicate to share an idea or emotion. Females may look at the conclusion to a good conversation as regrettable. Linguist Deborah Tannen of John Hopkins University has reported that women have a much stronger need than men to be understood and "connected" to a salesperson before they make a buying decision. This may explain the overwhelmingly negative response women have to pressure from salespeople.

Contrary to popular opinion, women are more likely to avoid risk in making buying decisions than men.

Women are very interested in trust-based, long term relationships. While men may venture into greater risk taking from time to time. Women seem more interested in fulfilling needs than speculation. Women may also be more apt to be intimidated by a salesperson. For this reason it is important to spend more time listening to her needs than you would a man. Many men converse to reach a conclusion or solve a problem. But since women often talk just to talk. It's important to let the woman tell you when she wants to get down to business. Wait for her to ask you for advice before you give it. Since women feel that trust is the most important factor in deciding on a salesperson for a major purchase, how well you listen may communicate more than what you say. But lest you think you are an excellent listener, remember that women value attentive listening the same as men value knowing the number of times

Selling to women may require a different mindset.

Michael Jordan was voted MVP. Women often complain that men don't act like they are listening, sound like they are listening or look like they are listening. When women are "connectedly" listening, they show frequent facial emotion. They also converse back and forth in a type of seamless conversation flow. Men often don't even make eye contact when they listen. Which makes the female client think, "If he can't even pay attention when I talk, how much can he care about me or my needs."

But lest you think you are an excellent listener, remember that women value attentive listening the same as men value knowing the number of times Michael Jordan was voted MVP.

But studies have also shown that once a woman trusts you, she is even more willing to be educated on products and services than men. While a man may try to tell you how much he knows, a woman may explain how much she wants to learn from you before she buys. She may also show her humility by admitting what she doesn't know, as long as she feels her show of vulnerability won't be taken advantage of. The catch is that she won't buy from you until she tests the relationship. She may do this by divulging personal feelings. But she won't confide unless she feels emotionally safe with you.

Selling to women may be the best business decision you will ever make. But not recognizing their unique needs and buying styles may be your worst. This huge market is ready and primed.

But few salespeople are prepared for it. Ross Perot once said in a speech to the NAACP, "your people". The subsequent uproar focused not on his insensitivity, but his lack of understanding. But by using these techniques, you'll gain greater understanding of how to sell to women. Your business will blossom as this huge market gains strength. 🔥



Meeting and Greeting

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MidStates HPBA is pleased to announce the grill winners for the 2002 "Member-Get-A-Member" contest:

- 1) Dave Campbell of Monsma Marketing Corp. (Grand Rapids, MI)
- 2) Greg Hill of Hearthland Sales, Inc. (Uniontown, OH)
- 3) Joe Bosze of Fireplace Shoppe of Northfield Inc. (Northfield, OH)
- 4) Colleen Behr of Behr Necessities Hearth Shoppe, Ltd. (Lexington, OH)
- 5) Jeff Keefer of The Chimney Care Company (Loveland, OH)

**GRILL WINNER DAVE CAMPBELL
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ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE!

New sessions have been added...

*Mystery Shopping Introduction
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Executive Director of MSHPBA
Monday June 2, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.*

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