

Upcoming CLC Webinars

Oct. 22 • 11 a.m. Central
LED and Solid State Lighting
Update: Time to Stock It
and Sell It

SPONSORED BY: **CREE** 

Nov. 19 • 11 a.m. Central
The Reality and Myths of
Energy-Efficient Lighting

SPONSORED BY: **PHILIPS**

Seminar instructor: Joe Rey-Barreau

Download registration forms from
www.americanlightingassoc.com/members.

Nov. 9 Regional Seminar: Richmond, Va.

Smart Moves in Slow Times:
Ideas for How to Improve Your
Post-Recession Positioning
and Profitability

TIME: 8:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Glen Allen Comfort Suites

INSTRUCTOR: Joe Rey-Barreau

CREDIT: 8 CLC hours

MEMBER COST: \$150 per participant

SPONSOR: Alco Lighting Sales, Inc.

For information and to register,
contact Alan Colker at 804-747-1230
or info@alancolker.com.



Add ENERGY STAR Tags to Qualifying Fixtures

Your manufacturers may be able to
provide special hanging tags for
ENERGY STAR qualified fixtures.

How to Attract and Keep Customers

By Larry Lauck, ALA VP Communications

Successful retailers today have become much more aggressive marketers.

A recession will do that every time. What does your showroom sales manager do with leads that come into the store? What do you do when someone visits your store to “look around?” Do you maintain communication with your customers throughout the year or let them slip away to your competitors?

Did you know that repeat customers spend 33 percent more than new customers? And referrals among repeat customers are 107 percent greater than non-customers.

It also costs six times more to sell something to a prospect than to sell that same thing to a repeat customer.

If you have not addressed your sales and marketing strategy and developed a plan to “re-energize” it in today’s economy, I suggest you look at implementing some of the simple steps below that successful retailers are using.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Ask yourself, “When someone enters our showroom, do we meet them with a friendly smile and introduce ourselves?” This sounds very basic, but you would be surprised how many stores let customers wander in and search out someone for assistance. We all have been there, and you wonder if anyone is in charge or cares whether you buy or not.

The late Sam Walton of Wal-Mart noticed in the ‘70s how a shopping experience changes when a customer is greeted politely by a salesperson that is dressed appropriately with a name badge. A positive attitude from a salesperson carries a lot of weight in customer interaction.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Is your showroom providing a pleasant shopping experience? Do you have a lighting lab to show them? What about a display showcasing ways to save energy?

Watch how your customers shop/browse in your store. Study their habits. What is the first thing they see when they walk in?

BUILD THE DATABASE

Before the customer leaves, do you ask to put them on your VIP e-mail list so they will receive special sales notices and free design tips for the home? Do you offer to provide the

customer a free copy of the ALA/*Better Homes and Gardens Lighting* magazine? Remind them that this is an \$8 magazine on the newsstand and you are offering it to them for free.

It helps enforce the “relationship” that you are beginning to build as you capture their e-mail address.

What do you do with the sales leads that the ALA BiNational Ad and PR Program sends out to you? Remember, those leads are coming from a person that “sought out” information on lighting. Market to them throughout the year so when they decide to buy, your store is top-of-mind.

E-MARKETING 101

Continue relationships long after customers have left your store. I receive and study e-mail newsletters at least once a month from successful retail giants such as Best Buy, Wal-Mart, Sears, AT&T, Orvis and Apple, as well as my local nursery and other small businesses that I frequent. The old adage “out of sight, out of mind” applies now more than ever when you consider the thousands of messages consumers are bombarded with daily. Where does your business fit in this mix?

The free ALA e-newsletter *Bright Ideas* has received rave reviews from consumers. Showrooms that customize it and deliver it to their customers report that it is opened and read four times more than any other communication they send out. The ALA also has short lighting design videos that can be sent to your customers.

MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION

I recommend that your e-mail campaign to your customers be at least monthly. Drive them to your Web site for more information. Give them ideas for decorating, for saving a few dollars off their utility bill and for staying current on popular styles and trends. In other words, keep you communications timely, current and — most of all — interesting to the reader.

How many e-mails do you receive that carry the same message such as “Big Sale” and nothing else? Impulse shopping is not the norm now as people are looking harder to justify the purchase. Give them reasons to buy that don’t just focus on price.

The above steps are easy to implement if you are not already doing so. Should you need any assistance, feel free to contact the ALA for help.