

Introducing the ALA's New Web Marketing Program

The American Lighting Association is launching a new web marketing program designed specifically to help showrooms succeed in today's online environment. The new program covers topics such as creating an effective website, designing powerful e-mail marketing and internet advertising campaigns, developing social media marketing and more.

The ALA's new web marketing program - entitled *Marketing Made Easier* - features several components, including a webinar series, course workbook, a monthly e-marketing newsletter and targeted consultations.



To ensure the new program's success, the ALA has partnered with renowned marketing expert **John Arnold** - author of *Web Marketing All-In-One Desk Reference for Dummies*, *E-Mail Marketing for Dummies*, and *Mobile Marketing for Dummies*, and expert columnist for *Entrepreneur* magazine - to bring the new program to lighting industry showrooms.

"Social media is one of the most important marketing tools in business today, and it is also the most confusing," says Kevin Herdt, CLC, president of Austin Bluffs Lighting and member of ALA's Board of Governors. "John Arnold's courses take the confusion out of social media and show the savvy business owner not only how to navigate social media but to profit from it."

To encourage showrooms to sign up for the internet marketing webinars, the ALA is offering the courses to ALA members for only \$39 each and to non-members for \$59 each. The webinar courses will begin on June 30. To register, showrooms may visit www.johnarnold.com/ala.

Proactive Showrooms is a publication of the American Lighting Association. Got a story idea? Send an e-mail to bglenn@americanlightingassoc.com.

Showroom Makes Changes, Boosts Bottom Line

Melbourne, Florida-based showroom House of Lights is grateful it made some important changes before the recession hit. These changes allowed the showroom to weather the storm during the economic crisis.

"We've all kind of been turned upside down for the lack of construction going on in this country right now," says Craig Bronson, vice president of business development for House of Lights. "The good news is we made some pretty difficult and challenging decisions during the good times. We renovated our facility, upgraded a lot of our technology, and changed a lot of our internal policies and procedures. We feel that had we not done that, we might not be around today."

What kind of changes did the showroom make?

"We went forward with a pretty aggressive renovation project of our facility," Bronson explains. "We created an additional 2,500 to 3,000 square feet of showroom space, reducing some warehousing space. We also invested pretty heavily in a lot of the technologies that we utilize in our showroom. We automated our business, including bar-coding every product that is in the showroom and running reports a multitude of different ways so we could really get forensic with the information in our business operations systems."

House of Lights also developed a preferred-supplier list so their buying efforts were strategically channeled.

"We were like many other lighting showrooms in that we bought from a whole bunch of people and were probably not very important to them," Bronson says. "We drastically reduced the lines of products we carried, and we heavily focused on the ones that were best of breed. We focused on getting the best products in front of our customers at the best prices. We worked those relationships so they became mutually profitable for both our vendor partners and ourselves."

Another wise decision made by the showroom was adding installations as one of their customer services.

"A few years ago, we introduced installations into our business," Bronson says. "Previously, we were not a showroom that installed the products we sold. Instead, we would refer our customers to local electricians. That caused us headaches because the electrician would mess it up and then he'd blame it on us, and then the customer would get mad and we'd end up having to fix the problem anyway."

"So we figured out a way to offer installations," Bronson continues. "That's been almost a godsend to our business. It's really helped us. It's been very profitable. We have much greater control over our customer orders and over the entire experience that a customer receives when they do business with us. The amount of rave reviews we've gotten since we've jumped into that business is just incredible."

Recently, House of Lights has also begun heavily emphasizing LEDs in its product lineup.

"We have made it a point to be on the leading edge of LED products," Bronson says. "We have it all, we research it all, we test it all and we display it all. We have seen an increasing amount of customers wanting to know about LED products. Not all of them are ready to invest the money it requires, but we're showing them a full cost-savings analysis. We're trying to get those customers to see the light. It's been very beneficial to our business. We've helped our bottom line quite a bit because of that."