

Marketing Corporate Awards

Anyone who sells corporate awards or wants to sell them is looking for the magic bullet for marketing those awards to companies. The ideal situation is to land accounts with larger sized companies that value award programmes and are willing to spend money on them. It's unlikely that this situation will just fall into your lap, so the real question is: "How can an award dealer make this happen?"

The answer to this question is the same as the answer to most questions in marketing. Ask yourself what you would want in the customer's position, then give that to them. So if you were the decision maker about awards at a company, what would you want from an awards dealer? First of all, buying awards would probably not be your only job. It probably wouldn't even be your main job. Most likely, it is an afterthought that was dumped on you, and you perceive it as 'additional work'. So what you would really want is for someone else to do that work for you. Great! That is the award dealer's jumping off point.

Assuming that you've already done the leg work to find out who your contact at the prospective company should be, you now have to set about convincing them to buy the company's awards from you. The best service you can offer the individual, whether they are the decision maker or merely the advisor on the purchase, is to take as much work off of their plate as you can. Do the hard work for them. How do you know what they need? Ask. If the company in question has not decided whether to do awards or if they have not determined what their award budget should be, you are in possession of the perfect opportunity to guide them to where you think they should be. You can now position yourself as the company's subject matter expert and award consultant.

Obviously, if you're selling awards, you are already a subject matter expert, but in order to position yourself as a consultant, you will need to integrate your expertise on awards with your knowledge of how best to utilise award programmes and the efficacy of such programmes in the corporate sector. Sound complicated? It doesn't have to be. There are several resources on line and in print that will quickly give you the info you need to influence your prospective clients that awards programmes are worth their weight in gold. Some places to look for this information include articles and books on employee recognition and appreciation. Basically, just use your favourite search engine, and you'll find a lot of good information on not only why award programmes are effective, but also, how to design them to increase the Return on Investment. These will be key pieces of information when convincing your potential clients to spend their money on your proposed award package.

Points that are well worth emphasising are:

1. Companies with cultures of recognition have significantly lower voluntary turnover rates than companies without recognition programmes.
2. Organisations where recognition occurs have better employee

engagement, productivity and customer service than those without.

3. Recognition programmes can be designed to create or improve specific desired results, and those results can be measured.

Armed with your newly honed award knowledge, you will be able to convincingly make a presentation that will lead the prospect to the decision to implement an award programme. So far, so good, but now you need to convince them that they should buy those awards from you. This is where we remember the original question. What do they want? They want the great results of an awards programme that you just described to them, but they don't want to have to allot personnel and resources to designing and managing the new programme. This is where you can help. You are an award consultant, right? You will take on all of the responsibility of coming up with ideas, making product suggestions, and most importantly managing the calendar. So, if as part of your new customer's new programme is a quarterly awards presentation, you will be responsible for prompting the company contact far enough in advance to get the awards produced and delivered. You can even offer as part of your service, to either conduct, help with or advise him or her on best practices for award presentations. Different organisations will put varying levels of value on such services, but if they know it is available, it is one more detail that will set you apart from and above your competition.

Now that you've got their attention, you can bring home the sale with your visual aids. "What visual aids?" you ask. Well, if you have a website and/or retail catalogues or flyers, those will be your main materials. If you don't, you can look to your suppliers for these materials. JDS Industries has a very robust retail marketing programme with multiple tools (for free or very reasonably priced) for awards retailers to utilise when making presentations to the end consumer. For example, the websites www.premier-corporateawards.com, www.premiercrystal.com and www.premieracrylic.com are available for retailers to either personalise and use as their own websites or to link to their own website. Instructions on how to do either of these is available at JDS's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/JDSINDUSTRIES. Premier Corporate Awards, Premier Crystal and Premier Acrylic are professionally designed websites that are constantly updated with new products as they become available. A companion,



high end, retail catalogue is also available for each of these websites at a small charge.

The key to landing the profitable corporate accounts is to remember that any awards dealer can sell them awards. What you can offer that everyone else won't is service. Present yourself as a full service recognition consultant, and sell them on the results that your awards, coupled with your service will produce in their business. The competition won't stand a chance just selling awards.

- Our thanks to Dawn Sackett at JDS Industries, Inc. for submitting this article. For more information on JDS Industries, Inc. please visit the website at www.jdsindustries.com.

