



REP-WORLD

Step Right Up
to the
Greatest Show
on earth

Rep Firm Wins Big with a Unique Approach

EDITORIAL | JACK FOSTER



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Jack Foster, president of Foster Communications, is the editor of **Agency Sales Magazine**. In addition to his duties in working with MANA, Jack writes for several other major marketing publications. His experience in publishing includes writing, editing, photography, production and printing. This, combined with Jack's understanding of the independent sales rep function, can provide the winning formula for your communication needs. Email: jfoster@manaonline.org.

While it's not exactly an example of bringing the mountain to Mohammad, it's about as close as a manufacturers' representative is going to come to the real meaning of that time-honored phrase. In this case, it's a matter of a Florida-based rep taking product presentations to a higher level than he ever has before.

Electrical Marketing Services (EMS), Altamonte Springs, Florida, has complemented its traditional sales calls by putting a mobile showroom on the road. The showroom is outfitted with its principals' products, catalogs and other sales literature. And, if that's not enough, they throw in a free lunch to seal the deal.

According to **James Yore**, **CPMR**, president of EMS, "We had to figure out a better way to get our products in front of the customer than what we had been doing in the past. Historically, we had to depend entirely upon the skills that our salesmen possessed. But, even if he was a skilled salesman and could be depended upon to get his time in front of the customer, he'd still be lucky to get the time needed to go over just three or four of your products. But when you throw into the mix considerations of carrying product samples, having a good supply of literature and catalogs and then getting sufficient time to do a lot more than just three or four product presentations, it's a whole different ballgame. Our thinking was that we had to come up with a better way to get the job done.

That's where the mobile showroom comes in.

Learning from Others

Yore is quick to give credit where credit is due, and in this case he notes that he read in an industry trade magazine about an Iowa-based rep firm that made use of a fully equipped product display trailer to communicate more effectively with customers in Iowa and Nebraska. "If that did anything," he says, "it gave credence to the fact that there was a better way to do the job."

Here's how EMS started to do the job better and began hitting the road.

A year ago EMS started traveling on one of its principal's annual road shows. "The tour took our sales team across the state of Florida to nine different distributors over the course of two weeks," explains EMS' **Scott Davis**. "This provided us with a great opportunity to meet face-to-face with the key players that we deal with on a daily basis."

With that as a start, Yore says it was evident immediately how effective this type of person-to-person contact was. The rep's next step was to carry the experiment a step further by making use of a friend's utility trailer that was equipped with a portable grill — all the better to provide an endless supply of hotdogs and hamburgers. "We invited our manufacturers to participate in the venture, and everything went very well."

The agency followed that up by buying its own trailer and putting it on the road late last year. "We went on the road over the course of nine days in two weeks," notes Yore. He continues that much of the success of the venture was due to the support offered by manufacturers. "They provided promotion dollars — not to mention the product samples, catalogs and literature." And the support provided by manufacturers didn't end there. According to Yore, "Our manufacturers quickly saw how effectively we were delivering their message, and they couldn't have been any more enthusiastic. During some of our stops when one manufacturer had to leave the mobile showroom, the others stepped in to ensure that everyone's message was delivered to customers."

Free Lunch Included

Yore isn't the only one enthusiastic about how well the mobile showroom worked. According to Davis, "The excitement surrounding the trailer during the tour was undeniable. Distributors, manufacturers, contractors and end users alike were impressed by it and by the professional-

PHOTO (OPPOSITE PAGE): Jim Lehan of EMS tends to the important business of feeding customers at Palmer Electric, Orlando, Florida.

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PHOTO (TOP, LEFT):
Pete Givens of **Shat-R-Shield** is just one of many manufacturers who will work the mobile showroom with EMS personnel.



PHOTO (TOP, RIGHT):
 A contractor customer begins his own self-tour of the mobile showroom during a lunchtime session at Rexel Electric in Pompano Beach, Florida.



PHOTO (BOTTOM, RIGHT):
 EMS' **James Yore** is partially visible as he readies sales literature for a Graybar Electric customer in Melbourne, Florida.

ism of our salespeople — not to mention the free lunch that was provided.”

Frank Holley, one of EMS’ outside salesmen, echoed those sentiments when he relates, “I’d have to admit that in the past our mission was to successfully gain access to the buying decision makers and do our best to cover at least three of the lines we represent. Even if we got to those decision makers, having enough time to get the job done was always a challenge. Now with the advent of the mobile showroom, the excitement was unmistakable on the part of contractors, distributors and customers when

they saw — some for the first time — all the lines we represented and were able to get their hands on products. The mobile showroom also provided us with the opportunity to have a generous supply of literature. They all had plenty of time to explore on their own and see much more than just a few of our lines.”

Yore adds that what EMS has experienced thus far is just a start. “This has worked so well for us,” he explains, “that I can see the time when we’ll have a trailer in each of the territories in which we work. It’s shown us that this is just a much better way to tell our story.” AS