



# PIAMS Monthly Update

**MEMBERSHIP = KNOWLEDGE & SUCCESS**

**November 2008**

**Printing & Imaging Association  
Mountain States (303)771-1578  
Fax(303)771-2945 [www.piams.org](http://www.piams.org)**

## **My Column**

**by Kathy Lauerman, President**

I'm writing this column several days after our *Green Industry Showcase* which all of you have been told about in our November 14<sup>th</sup> Weekly News.

The *Showcase* went well – although the turnout was less than we had expected. The last couple of months have been much different than any of us could have expected. As I said in last month's Update, this is a time (similar to what I mentioned my great uncle who had started my family's printing company just before the great depression had gone through) that everyone and every company is looking at with a conservative approach and a conservative wallet. That may not be a bad thing.

We can all recall the same approach was taken in 2003 and I want to remind everyone that is reading this – a conservative and mindful approach to how you handle your finances is a good thing. But a word of caution is also in order. Make sure you don't cut off your nose to spite your face or throw the baby out with the bathwater. In other words, be diligent in your approach without contracting to a degree you actually hurt your business. I recall a board member's statement during the last downturn "you can either circle the wagons and lose ground or focus on a strategy that keeps you grounded and solvent during turbulent times". Those were good words.

Throughout this "Update" we will be covering protecting yourselves from fines and promoting what you are doing in the Environmentally Friendly arena by participating in our Environmental Results Program. We also have a great article by John Graham for your sales team. There is much you can do to make it through this newest rough patch and PIAMS knows what the competition can throw at you which you too are experiencing.

In closing, I want to remind all of you that it is more important than ever to have this association here to work on your behalf. With the institution of our new Credit Card Processing Program with First National Merchant Solutions that can save you quite a bit of money, to our new program with G&K Services which will begin on the Front Range, we are working on ways to save our members money and do what they need to do on a daily basis to keep their businesses going.

## **Participate in the ERP**

From its launch at the *PIAMS Green Industry Showcase* through December 5<sup>th</sup>, you can sign up to participate in the Environmental Results Program (ERP) brought to you jointly by PIAMS and CDPHE's Small Business Assistance Program. Participation will help you find out if you are in compliance with all of the state's environmental regulations as well as federal OSHA regs, with an added bonus of getting you on your way to becoming a **PIAMS Green Member**. Special incentives have been put in place for participants including a special referral period (to keep you out of potential fines for violations should you be inspected) through March 5, 2009. To find out how participation can help you and your company contact Kathy Lauerman at 303.771.1578.

## **PIAMS Buying Power Programs CAN SAVE YOU MONEY**

There is no better time to look at the programs PIAMS has available to member firms that give you discounts and/or more for your money than what you may be using now. The two newest programs are Credit Card Processing through First National Merchant Services and a discounted Shop Towel & Uniform program through G&K Services (that includes discounts to member firms currently using their services) available throughout their Colorado service area. To find out how these two programs can save you money, call Jennifer Janness at 303.771.1578.

PIAMS has many other buying power programs and endorsed providers that you should take a look at when you are doing your financial analysis for 2009. Just give us a call.

## **Welcome New Members**

Canon Business Solutions  
Centennial, Colorado  
G&K Services  
Denver, Colorado  
Lewan & Associates  
Denver, Colorado  
Ricoh Americas Corporation – PPBG  
Denver, Colorado

## A Memo to Salespeople: Get Ready to Sell More in 2009

By John Graham

Even though the economy is in serious trouble, nothing has changed. You still need to make sales. Whatever your industry and whatever else is happening, one task remains: *closing sales*.

Here's the problem: even though you may know your products and have the right selling skills that may not be enough to get you where you want to be in 2009. If your job is demanding in good times, what do you think it will be like in the year ahead? So, here's the question: what do you need to add that can help you meet your numbers?

That's what the next 1,250 words are all about. Just so you'll know, they are based on 25 years of working with sales professionals. If that doesn't grab you, stop now and have a nice day. Otherwise, get ready because what's coming may be irritating. At least I hope so. Here goes:

**Get over seeing an "executive when looking in the mirror."** Get the idea out of your head that you're some sort of "sales executive" or that wearing a suit makes you special. It doesn't. You sell and you'll get farther if you think of yourself as a "working stiff."

Playing executive messes up your head. Before you know it, you get the idea that work is for everyone else in your company and particularly for those on what you euphemistically call "my support team." Get over it. Selling is no longer about picking the so-called "low hanging fruit." That's over and done. Now, it's about managing your job. And that means lots of work.

**Maximize your visibility.** "In this business it's better to be seen," comments an editor of a well-known publication. But not like "yesterday's salespeople," who thought "schmoozing" was what it was all about. They may love you, but that doesn't mean you're going to get the business.

It's time to invest yourself. Look around and figure out what needs to be done. Start looking and acting like a leader. Oh, yes, take a stand. Too many salespeople are so fearful of offending someone they are little more than well-dressed wimps.

**Become a total producer.** OK, so you see yourself as some sort of "specialist." Perhaps you harbor the fantasy of "executive sales" or some other equally meaningless euphemism. That's fine, unless it blinds you on how to go about building a solid business (remember, you are in business for yourself).

Your customers (that's what they are; *not* clients) want less stress. You're in the perfect position to help them simplify their lives. In fact, make that your primary product. Figure out how to make it easier and more convenient for your customers. If that seems like too much work, try doing something else.

**Go after as many accounts as possible.** Stop thinking small accounts are beneath you, no matter where you are in your sales career. If you're just chasing "the big ones," forget it. Keep it up and you're on the way out.

Sure, you should be ready when one comes along, but

spending your time dreaming about winning the big account lottery distracts you from the business you could be writing. The more happy customers you have, the closer you get to the big ones, which will probably drop in your lap!

**Be an ardent customer advocate.** Far too often, salespeople are focused on the sale and not the customer. It doesn't take too many smarts to understand that you're working in an environment fraught with dangers and that your customers are on edge. They need help. Your help. What they want is someone they can trust and count on to be on their side when a problem arises. But, come to think about it that takes a lot of effort. "Cozying up" to a customer is more fun.

**Stop trying to sell something.** Let's cut to the chase: selling is getting more difficult by the day. If your sales manager doesn't believe it, suggest that he/she go out and make a few sales calls.

The problem is that "the buying mindset" has changed. You're up against customers who flatly refuse to be your "prey." All the cunning of the greatest "hunter" won't help you "bag" the customer.

Why? The answer is awesome: the customer is now the "hunter" and you're the "prey." Your job is to help the hunter bag you (what you're selling). Trying to grab the customer is gone; now the task is helping the customer grab you.

Here's the sales task: Figure out and then focus on what your customers care about. Nothing else matters today. *Nothing*. That's what will draw them closer and closer to you. When you see them smile, close the sale.

**Blow up your website.** It's not an act of terrorism; you will be doing yourself, your customers and the World Wide Web a favor. Everybody else, too. At least 99.99 percent of websites have no value. Actually, they have a negative impact.

Here's the point: they fail to make the case why a visitor would want to do business with the company. Oh, you give great service? Isn't that nice. Every business says that, including the people they are doing business with now who can't do anything right!

Stop thinking about how long you've been in business and start thinking about what it will take to get customers to want to do business with you.

Here's an idea: as a salesperson, you may want to think about having your own website or blog. Waiting for your employer to get the message will only cost you sales.

**Talk to customers about what matters to them.** Although it takes commitment and work, it's so easy today to communicate with customers. You have so much that can really make a difference and connect with those you work with: Showing customers how to reduce costs and increase productivity, for example. As a salesperson, you have actual case histories of how you have benefited your customers.

Message: let customers know you listen and care. It also keeps their attention on you as their advisor and not just another sales rep.

**Manage your business.** No matter whom you work for, you're really [insert your name here], *Inc.* You're a business owner and need to do everything any other business owner

does. You are in charge of marketing, administration, follow up *and* sales. If this isn't clear, let's put it this way: if it's going to get done, you're going to do it. So, stop whining that the company isn't giving you the support you need to be successful.

**Act like you're in charge.** *Never* let customers get the idea that you're going to "hand them off" to someone else, ever. When that happens, they get the message that once the sale is made, you're on your way. When that happens, it undermines your relationship with the customer.

Even when it's appropriate to hand off a task, customers want to know you're in charge and involved. That's what trust is all about.

**Avoid meetings.** Your job is about having time to do what needs to be done making sales and that's the reason most meetings are your enemy. They steal your time, causing you to cut corners in serving customers.

The rule is never to attend a meeting unless it will benefit you *directly*. Meetings kill time and drain energy; they are interruptions in your work day. Your job is selling and your performance will improve in relation to the number of meetings you miss.

At this point, you may think that all this is unrealistic and places too heavy a burden on salespeople. My response is simple: the problems you can solve for your customers with the products you sell deserve the effort, unless, of course, you would rather be an executive.

*John R. Graham is president of Graham Communications, a marketing services and sales consulting firm. He writes for a variety of insurance and business publications and speaks on business, marketing and sales issues.*

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## Holiday Gala/Annual Meeting & Foundation Auction

Although this is a "meeting" of sorts, it is an important one. Each year PIAMS members gather to celebrate the holidays, visit with peers, honor their PIAMS Officers & Board representatives, get an update on what's happening at PIAMS and support Mountain States Printing Education Foundation through its main fundraiser – The Auction.



**Tuesday, December 9, 2008**  
**Crystal Rose**

**9755 E. Hampden Ave – Denver, CO 80231**

5:30-7:00 pm ~ Reception & Auction Viewing

7:00-8:00 pm ~ Dinner & Announcements

8:00-9:30 pm ~ Installation of Board & Officers and  
Special Presentations

**Celebration of SOC Code Accomplishments**

Silent Auction Results and Live Auction with **Dave Aguilera**

**\$60.00 per person**

For reservations all Jennifer Janness at 303.771.1578

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### November 20<sup>th</sup>

11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

PIAMS Board of Directors Meeting

PIAMS Training Room

5031 S. Ulster St. #350

Denver, Colorado



### November 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> PIAMS Closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday



### December 9<sup>th</sup>

5:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Holiday Gala/Annual Meeting

& Education Foundation Auction

At the Crystal Rose, 9755 E. Hampden Ave., Denver, CO

### December 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>

### PIAMS Closed for the **Christmas Holiday**



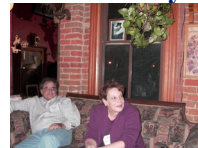
### January 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>

### PIAMS Closed for the New Year Celebration

The 2009 Calendar of Events is in the works and will be posted in the December issue of the PIAMS Monthly Update including more Cocktail Parties like our most recent one "just for Associate Members" at the Buckhorn Exchange. Here are a few "shots" from the evening....



Obviously before the "shots"



It WAS Election Day

