

NEWS RELEASE

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Marketing Initiative Gives Maintenance Plans A New “Homey” Concept

Turning the phrase “Inside Wire Maintenance Plan” into a concept that not only is better understood but desired by customers was the goal when Nashville-based marketing strategists began developing a communications outline for its clients. Making maintenance plans the cool thing to do wasn’t an easy task but results from the marketing efforts have proven to be very positive.

“It was important for us to put a value on the maintenance plan that telco customers would respond to in a positive way,” said Charlene Taylor, president and creative director for Chaz Taylor Inc. of Nashville (CTI). “It became an important element in the marketing plan because telcos are across the board raising the monthly rates for maintenance plans. And while most rural telcos have managed to keep the monthly rates comparatively low, it isn’t an easy sell in today’s high-tech world.”

In order to address the rate increase, CTI presented the plans in a new format – almost as if it was a new idea that customers would be attracted to. The words “inside wire maintenance” were replaced with “A Happy House” and “The Lifeline In Your Home Network,” which prompted customers to look an old service in a new way.

Case Study #1:

Piedmont Rural Telephone Cooperative’s Strategy

“In this case, we prepared a special insert that outlined the reasons why an inside wire maintenance plan was important in very specific terms,” Taylor said. “And for most people, the bottom line was money. The simple fact is that even with a monthly payment for the plan, it still costs less than one repair visit and that was the message that brought it home for most customers.”

Case Study #2:

Bloomer Telephone Strategy

“This is the ‘Happy House’ concept that linked together the ideas of a telecommunications connection with a real value of saving money,” she said. “This combination makes for a happy house, and that message resonated with the telco customers.”

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CTI's Concept Strategies For Inside Wire Maintenance

“When we started this project, we first wanted to determine what kind of significance customers placed on wire maintenance,” she said. “We wanted to determine how to tap into this significance and find ways to increase revenue and meaning for the local network.”

- Determine where the customers gets their **perception of value** in the maintenance plan and the local network.
- Develop a more **meaningful name** for the program that better suggests its value, and create a **marketing service symbol** that emphasizes its meaning to the customer.
- Look for ways to add value to the maintenance program and the ongoing **activity service reporting** it generates.
- Enhance the program to **meet the changing needs** of a telco – entertainment, data, etc.
- **Customize** the plan for key target markets.
- **Listen** to what customers have to say about the plan, the monthly rates, etc., and address any questions or criticisms.

“We see inside wire maintenance as one of the forgotten marketing and loyalty building opportunities,” Taylor said. “In both of the case studies mentioned, the telcos reported an increase in sign-ups to the plan, which resulted in a revenue-generating program. By addressing a routine program in a new and exciting way, even when announcing that monthly rates are going up, telcos can still create a buzz about the local network that is beneficial to all involved.”