

# Contractor Marketing

## Roofing and Social Media

### Creating Processes & Programs that Work for a Company

by Heidi J. Ellsworth, executive vice president of marketing, EagleView Technology Corp.

(Editor's Note: Heidi J. Ellsworth, a graduate of University of Portland, has been working in the roofing industry since 1993. Having held positions with Malarkey Roofing, Carlisle SynTec and EcoStar LLC, Ellsworth is best known as the founder of the roofing-focused marketing firm, HJE Marketing. She is now executive vice president of marketing for EagleView Technology Corporation.)



**M**arketing for roofing contractors is somewhat of a mystery to many professionals in the industry. How does a contractor put together a marketing program; how do they budget for it; and what really works? Like anything, it comes down to creating processes and programs that work for each individual company. The ability to customize a marketing program is key to finding the best return on investment. Through this column, ideas will be shared from across the country. Some will work in your program and some will not. The important step is to continue learning about tried-and-true marketing concepts along with an understanding of the newest trends.

Social media, one of the hottest marketing tools today, will be the introductory topic for this marketing column. As roofing professionals, many contractors look at Facebook, Linked In, and Google+ as something from another planet. But contractors are finding that, going forward, social media will be one of the most important tools in their marketing program.

Upfront, don't try to conquer all social media at once. There are some trends that are helping contractors decide where to start. It really depends on your type of business. For residential contractors, Facebook continues to grow in popularity. It is a great referral tool, letting your customers speak. For this month's column, the focus will be on social media for residential roofing contractors and in future issues the best social media for the commercial side of the business will be addressed.

In residential roofing, social media efforts require a business to consumer (B2C) approach. The trick is to make it interesting and sustainable. Contractors need to ask themselves why a homeowner would want to follow the company on social media. Why would customers want to *Like* a company's page or even return to find out more information? It starts with the company. Every person who works for a roofing company has a group of friends in the community. They are involved in schools, churches, non-profit organizations, and community activities. At the end of the day the employees are the voice in the community. They need to think of themselves as brand ambassadors for the company. Empowering employees to be a part of the social media program is the first step. They should be the first ones to *Like* the company Facebook page and *Share* it to their group of friends. The sales team can use this very effectively by inviting past, current, and potential customers to find out more and check out what other customers are saying on the company Facebook page. Creating a safe space for discussion, referrals, recommendations, and basic camaraderie is essential in this medium.

*“At the end of the day  
the employees  
are the voice  
in the community.”*

Pictures of new roofs and happy homeowners will only go so far on generating return visits, likes, and shares. Creating events that engage the audience is what really starts to utilize the potential of the Facebook world. One organization for residential contractors to consider that offers a unique and altruistic approach to using social media is No Roof Left Behind (NRLB). Jay and Dena Elie of Ridgecon Construction started this organization with the vision that by working to provide help to those in need they would be able to help their business, too.

Contractors post a request for stories of deserving people or families who need a new roof. The stories are reviewed, with usually four stories posted on Facebook on which the community may vote. This creates not only goodwill but also amazing traffic on social media. The brand awareness of the company excels. Leading contractors in the West have become members of NRLB including Interstate Roofing out of Portland, Oregon. “We like the community involvement,” stated Shelley Metzler, president of Interstate Roofing. “Referrals yield 80% of our leads so it has allowed us to give that a boost with encouraging the community to vote for a deserving family to receive a free roof.” That is exactly what the program is about.

“It is really about everyone winning,” stated Jay Elie, president of No Roof Left Behind. “We wanted to understand social media but we also wanted to help our community. We were able to combine the two and have seen extreme success.” Now, NRLB has been sharing their success with contractors across the country, teaching them how to leverage the

(Continued on Page 10)

# Social Media

(Continued from Page 8)

promotional value while also helping their local communities. And for residential roofing contractors, that is the true power of social media: creating buzz and interest in your own community. Facebook continues to drive that success.

Another great way to use Facebook is in conjunction with distribution and manufacturing. Many manufacturers have great Facebook campaigns that can be utilized. In the case of EagleView Technologies, aerial imagery is shared constantly on social media. Showing aerial imagery of homes that have been reroofed is a fun way to share the company's technology expertise. Everyone loves to see his or her home from the air. Of course, be sure with all photos obtained either from homeowners or aerial images, to get permission before posting.

Manufacturers, such as GAF, are constantly running programs for their contractors on Facebook. Working in conjunction with them, sharing


posts, or posting current specials shows not only a community connection but differentiates the business to homeowners by sharing the larger view of the industry.

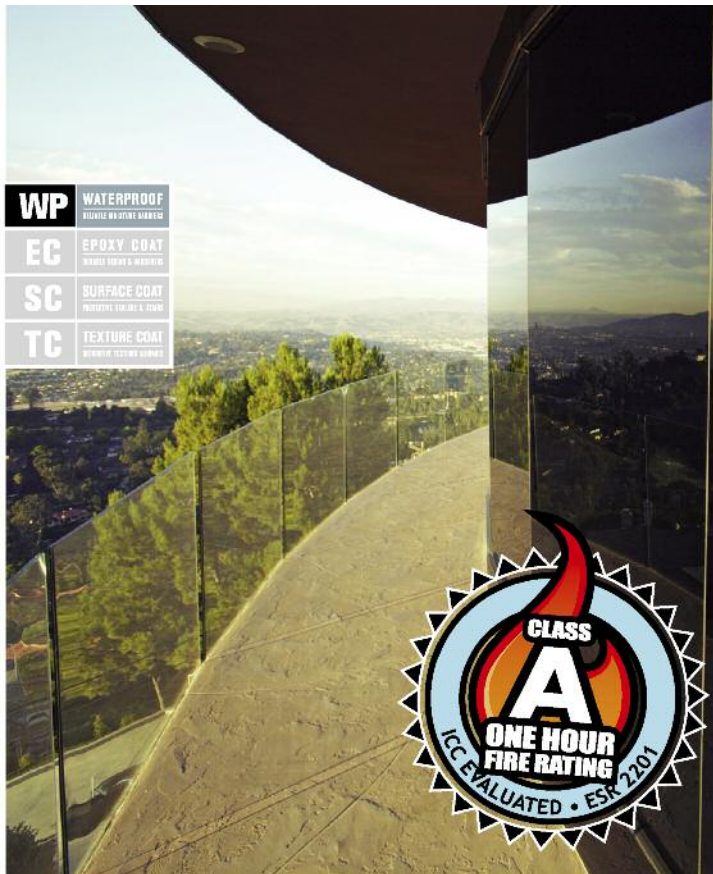
Don't leap into too many social avenues at first. In all honesty, depending on the business, there are several that may never be appropriate. But, one medium that is becoming critical for not only social media success but for website search engine optimization is Google+. It is a social networking site owned and operated by Google, Inc. Google is giving Google+ content a higher ranking than websites that have similar content. Google+ is indexed immediately for search. So, take a few extra minutes and also post the content in Google+. It will help to register the business with Google+ Local in addition to other online directories.

As noted, this is a strong tool for Search Engine Optimization, which hopefully pulls the company name to page one of the search engine. Basically, when posting in Google+, there is a higher probability of hitting the top of Google searches. Creating

strong content is the key. A great practice is to get the sales team to take pictures with happy customers, with approval of course, and post it. It makes it personal. With the homeowner's approval, posting to their Facebook page provides instant referrals.

Interactive content is key to spur active responses but it is also important to keep current and past customers aware of the company's status in social media. Website, collateral, and correspondence should all note that the company is on Facebook, Google+, or whichever social media the company is actively updating. As they *Like* the company's page, word spreads that, in turn, not only increases social media presence but also makes the telephone ring.

Social media is all about sharing the best of the company. Traditional marketing can be very expensive. Social media offers the opportunity to send a message out to the public in a new way that is currently highly regarded. Social media marketing draws prospective customers and the only cost is a little time. 



 **westcoat**

### Westcoat ALX updated ICC ESR-2201 Class A 'E-108' and One Hour 'E-119' Fire Rated

ALX, Westcoat's premier waterproof deck coating system has received an updated evaluation report ESR-2201 from the ICC providing evidence that ALX Standard and Custom systems meet code requirements. ICC-ES thoroughly examined Westcoat's product information, test reports, calculations and quality control methods to ensure the ALX systems are code-compliant. Builders, architects, contractors, specifiers and designers can be confident in the strength, durability and effectiveness of an ALX waterproof deck coating by Westcoat.

For technical information, visit [www.westcoat.com](http://www.westcoat.com)

**FOR PROFESSIONAL USE ONLY**

770 Gateway Center Drive San Diego, CA 92102 800•250•4519 • Fax 619•262•8606 • [westcoat.com](http://westcoat.com)