

Contractor Marketing


Networking

Local, Regional & National Networking Helps Marketing

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.)



 An important part of marketing is networking. Not just the kind that was discussed in the last column about Social Selling but also the networking with industry peers, colleagues, and vendors. As I have worked with roofing companies over the years, I have found that the companies who are involved in their industry associations while also working closely with distribution, manufacturing, and service providers such as technology companies are the businesses that have sustained growth, excellent reputations, and true professionalism.

Contractors who have carved out the time, have found that working together to improve their local community through education and legislative support has helped grow their businesses, professionalism, and brand in the market.

Start with Local Associations

A good example of this happened with the Colorado Roofing Association. This group of roofing professionals worked diligently over the past years to create their Residential

Roofing Bill of Rights. The initiative was educational for homeowners on how to select professional roofing contractors along with understanding their rights and the important questions to ask.

Through the organization of these types of community efforts, local contractors are able to promote their business and also give back to the community by offering education that makes a difference for the homeowner.

WSRCA Involvement

Working locally is only the first step. Many contractors are members of their regional associations where there is an even higher level of benefits including strong technical, safety, and legal support, along with exceptional networking with contractors from a large area. Western States Roofing Contractors Association (WSRCA) membership is an excellent way of gaining information and ongoing education related to technical updates and industry events.

"It is amazing the people you meet and learn from by being involved in an association," stated Bob Jones, president of Airtight Construction based in Concord, California. "It is not only fellow roofing contractors but manufacturer and distribution representatives that support the associations." Jones, a WSRCA board member, has an active role on both the technical and membership committees. He is also committed to networking while at the meetings. As an example, during a recent WSRCA board meeting, I was able to visit with Bob about my company, EagleView Technologies. He was in the market for adding technology solutions to his business and particularly in market-

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Another contractor who's benefited from association involvement is Christian Madsen, president of Madsen Roofing and Waterproofing, Inc., Sacramento, California. Starting at a local level and still active as vice president of The Roofing Contractors Association of California (RCAC) while also a member of Northern California Roofing Association, Madsen has actively been involved locally with important legislation and initiatives for many years. Through his involvement locally and by networking with other industry professionals, he was nominated for the WSRCA board. Serving on several committees and leadership roles, he became president of the association in 2010. "The technical papers and educational initiatives of WSRCA were what made me want to be involved. They are tremendous. The involvement with fellow contractors has made a major difference in improving how we go to market with our company; from new technology solutions to strong industry relationships, my involvement with WSRCA was invaluable."

Madsen now serves on the board of directors for the National Roofing Contractors Association. "It was an honor to be asked to serve on the national board. I attended the NRCA FEI program as well as the Executive Management Institute. It simply is a great opportunity to learn what other contractors are doing around the country and network," stated Madsen.

Some of the best marketing an owner can do is the ability to bring new ideas and continuing education to their business, leadership, and employees. It all starts with your involvement in the industry. If you are not a member of an association, reach out, join up, and reap the benefits. Make it your New Year's resolution. 