How Facebook Can Help Your HVACR Business

BY GRIFFIN DAVIS

HVACR professionals can’t afford to ignore social media any longer. In a time where everyone is looking to be constantly connected, updated and informed, social media has served as a perfect medium for these needs, becoming a major staple in our modern world. Going one step further, Facebook has become the gold standard of social media. In fact, more than 150 million people in the U.S. have a Facebook account—almost half of all Americans—and 71% of the entire U.S. Web audience is a Facebook user.

Still, while many Americans are obsessed with social media—and Facebook in particular—you may be thinking, “What does it have to do with my business?”

In a 2009 New York Times interview, Clara Shih, author of “The Facebook Era,” stated a simple truth: “You need to be where your customers are and your prospective customers are. And with 300 million people on Facebook, and still growing, that’s increasingly where your audience is for a lot of products and services.” What is most noteworthy about this quote is that it was given two years ago when Shih already saw how companies could benefit from Facebook. It’s time to listen to her advice and integrate Facebook into your business.

Facebook/HVACR 101

To start, integrating Facebook into your business will help you communicate with current clients. A Facebook business page allows existing customers to interact with you by giving instant feedback on your services, “liking” your Facebook page and talking about your business with their Facebook friends. A Facebook page allows you to build a long-lasting customer relationship that goes far beyond basic transactions. Most importantly, positive client interaction helps solidify client retention.

Facebook is a fantastic way to build word-of-mouth referrals and promote your company’s reputation. You can add customer reviews, referrals and photos of your work to your Facebook page. A well-built page makes you look more professional in today’s business world. It also helps increase your search-engine ranking and boost word-of-mouth referrals.

Finally, having a Facebook page can help you get new customers from the Web. In fact, 69% of consumers say they are more likely to use a local business if they can find it on a social-networking site. Social media is finding increasing use as a search engine—and you can’t afford not to be found.

A survey of 1,132 small businesses conducted by Webs.com found 70% of business owners were using social media. Furthermore, 76% of these owners said they plan to boost their social-media use in the upcoming year. The study also found that 25% of social-media users update their accounts more than once a day. Again, if business rivals are using social media, and potential customers are regularly updating their information, can you afford not to have a social-media presence?

Once you’ve developed a Facebook business page, there are certain ways it should be handled. For starters, it is important to reach out to customers who become “fans” of your business or who “like” your page. As a small business, you have the ability to regularly interact with your fans, while larger businesses and corporations may lack the resources to do so. If you build a personal rapport with a customer, it is more likely that they will be a longtime client—and that user will be more inclined to tell their friends and associates about your company.

A Facebook business page also is a great way to tell followers about special promotions or deals. You want to engage your Facebook users, and this is a great way to increase sales. Update your status and talk about the promotion with something funny, informational or insightful, so as not to appear to constantly be selling something to them; and place coupons on the page that followers can print out directly from Facebook.

To start your social media endeavor, all you need to do is follow this link: www.facebook.com/pages/create.php. If you are busy and can’t spend your own time creating and managing your Facebook page, numerous Web-design and Web-marketing companies can take care of these tasks for you. Whichever route you decide to take, Facebook (and Twitter, YouTube and Blogger) has become a part of the communication world and needs to be a part of your small business.

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