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GILA GAZETTE

News for the Architectural and Automotive Glass Coating Industry

Fall 2003

SHOW THE NEIGHBORS THAT YOU ARE THERE



All of us at Gila Distributing understand that the business can sometimes feel like a roller coaster ride...sometimes you're up, and sometimes you're down. That's why at Gila Distributing we are dedicated to providing you with products and ideas designed to help grow your business and educate your customers about the financial, medical, aesthetic and comfort benefits that window film can offer.

It is no secret that the cost of advertising can really hamper your efforts when it comes to maximizing your bottom line. Sometimes the most economical means of promoting your business does not always reach your intended audience.

Take a look below at our window film yard sign. This sign is the perfect size, tasteful, not overbearing, and lets the rest of the neighbors know that the LLumar film you installed protects this property. This is a perfect opportunity for you to leave your mark on a finished product and advertise to the countless number of car owners and homeowners who live in the area. This marketing method has been proven time and time again in industries such as real estate, contract building and residential painting.



Utilizing the LLumar yard sign will really help you generate new business as well as potential leads. Putting the sign in front yards after completing flat glass, or even mobile automotive jobs, is just like ADVERTISING FOR FREE!

The leads could be endless! All signs are dual sided and come in packs of 25 for \$100! Call us today to order your signs!
800-558-6271 or 770-345-7252

For more information on Marketing Materials that can help aid your advertising efforts, please visit <http://www.gilainc.com/access/access.htm>, and double click on the LLumar logo at the bottom.

Weather your summer sales are up or down?

All of us in the southeast have experienced a milder summer than in years past. Record rainfall amounts and no sunshine have a direct effect on the amount of window film applied.



What do you do to fix this? You can sell more products to existing customers or find more customers! Try adding complementary products. If you're hesitant to increase inventory and labor costs don't worry. We offer two different products, Aquapel Glass Treatment and Body Armor Paint Protection, that virtually have no inventory costs and turn BIG profits. With the rainy season upon us, and wettest summer on record, there is no excuse why Aquapel Glass Treatment is NOT applied to every vehicle that enters your shop.



Body Armor paint protection is also an easy add-on. If someone owns or leases a \$25,000+ vehicle, why wouldn't they want to protect it from potential damage? It's invisible, has a lifetime warranty, and helps protect their vehicle. If you think that these products are unprofitable, think again. Many car dealerships are selling their vehicles with these products included! This is business you are losing TODAY! Network with car dealerships, show them how your company can make them money with no hassle. (HINT: Try RV Dealers!)



What about commercial or residential work? Be a leader in the industry by becoming actively involved in associations that have a direct impact on your sales. Builders (BOMA), Interior Designers (ASID), Property Managers (IFMA), etc are all trade associations that you can belong to that will create invaluable resources. Have you ever tried to work with a local builder to spec window film on a house even before its sold? Why NOT? Expand your business and make the effort.



These suggestions can mean the difference between being flat for the year or having a 30% increase. Make sure that you are taking all the steps possible to help you grow your business.

Tennessee Tint Law...

Motor vehicle windows with tinting, reflecting or sun screen material

- ◆ It is unlawful if the vehicle has a visible light transmittance of less than 35% or with the exception of the manufacturer's standard installed shade band, reduces the visible light transmittance in the windshield below 70% or if any "professional installer" applies tinting materials to any vehicle so as to cause that vehicle to be in violation of this section
- ◆ All professional installers should adhere a label to the lower right corner of the driver's window including the installer's business name and the legend "Complies with Tennessee Code Annotated, 55-9-107" and each customer must be provided with a signed receipt for each vehicle tinted including the date of installation; make, model, paint color and license plate number and state; and the legend "This receipt shall be kept with vehicle registration documents."
- ◆ Any person with a medical condition that is adversely affected by ultraviolet light may submit a statement to the commissioner of safety from that person's physician

"One of the greatest aspects of the window tinting industry is the ability to start in the business with very little capital. When I started my window tinting business, all I had was a box of tint, a cell phone and my car. I also only charged \$50 for a full tint job. I know, I know - what was I thinking charging that?"

I now own two tinting companies in Rockville, Md., and charge a lot more than 50 bucks. In this bi-monthly column, I will share my experiences on how starting a window tinting company has great ups and downs. I'd also like to share several business ideas that may help you in your practice and may make working on your projects much more enjoyable.

When I started out with that first box of tint in my car, I figured out that I had to go out and market myself. I printed up some cheap business cards and headed to the nearest auto dealership. This turned out to be a smart move because I was one of the few mobile tinters in my area. This meant that the dealerships didn't have to move their expensive cars off their lots to have film applied. Sure, it often took a long time to get paid (the average dealer invoice gets paid every 30 days), but I started charging them for making me wait. I also found out that each dealership usually has other sales locations in the area. Once I got my foot in the door with several of them, the steady business helped me afford to eat during the slower, cooler months.

The moral of this story is to get the dealerships on your side. Working for the dealerships honed my skills. While I wasn't the greatest tinter when I started working for them, I became much better with practice. This made me want to improve my skills over a larger customer base and I began focusing on the quality of my work more closely.

I heard somewhere that if a job is done well, your business will get you five referrals, but if the job is done poorly, your business will lose 20 potential referrals. I found out this was true because the better my work became the more I focused on the quality of my work, the more referrals I obtained. Focusing on word-of-mouth marketing means not having to spend much extra time driving around looking for potential customers. If you do a job well, other people will market for you. Never be only partially satisfied with your work - always make sure your work is so good that you will be fully satisfied.

Now that dealers and their customers are on your side, you still need to do more marketing because you are still trying to grow. Turn your attention to the local car stereo stores, auto accessory shops, speed shops, custom alterations and auto glass companies. These parallel businesses receive many calls for glass tinting, so make friends with the local owners, who just might want to cut you a deal on bulk tinting, and receptionists who field all the individual calls.

Once I have received a few referrals from the owners, I'll send them some basketball tickets, and once I have received a few referrals from a receptionist, I'll send them a gift certificate for Starbucks or Ben & Jerry's. They get a little treat and I get paid!

This article has focused on getting started and the importance of marketing both for a start-up and for an established business. However, it's important to remember that it doesn't take much to get started in this business, but to stay in you have to let people know what you do, target specific areas and do a good, quality job. Focus on the quality of your work and the bigger bucks should follow.

My next article will focus on the next step I took in my business, which was to trade in my long hours on the road for a shop with low overhead and good visibility. I'll discuss the importance of keeping costs low and what you should be looking for in your real estate. In the meantime, keep up the shameless self-promotion, because when the going gets tough the tough make more than 50 bucks!

JUST STARTING OUT by Laurence Streidel
taken from Window Film Magazine July-August 2003