



Here's A 'Telemarketing' Service, But Without Annoying Intrusions

By Loree Stark

OCTOBER 11, 2004 -- Irvine, Calif. — Whatever you do, don't call them telemarketers.

John Tisdale, director of operations for ListeNation, a voice marketing company that serves trade show managers, and Ray Baum, account management director for the company, shy away from the term that most would use to describe their service.

The reason, Tisdale and Baum say, is that "telemarketing" inevitably evokes images of interruptions at dinner time, solicitations for products consumers have no interest in, and long-winded salespeople who just don't take no for an answer.

ListeNation — which has been targeting show managers for a couple of years but has only recently seen a surge in business — uses much of the same technology as other telemarketers. But Tisdale and Baum say the similarities end there.

Instead of barraging individuals with ill-timed phone calls, ListeNation promises its calls will reach its audience at appropriate hours, and instead of salespeople, ListeNation simply delivers a quick recorded message.

Baum said many show managers are quick to say they find telemarketing calls annoying. However, he said, "Let's say your car was recalled for a major safety issue, and for some reason you didn't see anything on the news. Then you get a message from the dealership saying they want to fix your car. What's your response then? The same thing goes with meetings and shows. There is a relevance for these calls. It's not a telemarketing call when it's a communication between an association and an attendee."

ListeNation charges a \$300 set-up fee, which includes the first message. There is then a cost per call, which decreases with the number of calls to be made. For each additional message made, there is another charge.

To personalize the service, Tisdale and Baum recommend that the group or association have someone that is familiar with the targeted audience make the message, like the chairman of the association, or the person who will be delivering the keynote address. Groups can use as few or as many messages as they want.

Steve Miller, president of The Adventure, a marketing consultancy specializing in the meetings and expositions industry in Federal Way, Wash., said ListeNation could prove to be helpful in a variety of ways for show or event managers.

"It's a great technology not just for promoting attendance, but for contacting exhibitors and reminding them of different deadlines they are facing," Miller said.

"There are a lot of ways to use voicemail broadcast technology to enhance the value of the show and provide opportunities to help attendees and exhibitors."

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