

Our Town America Helps Hair Salons Stay a Cut Above



Even in the recession resistant hair care industry, a rapidly changing economic environment has many salon and barbershop owners searching for answers. They've tried every marketing tactic in the book and still can't find a way to separate their salon from the competition.

That's not the case for Milwaukee-based Sport Clips owner, Wally Sauthoff, and Tampa-based boutique salon owner, Geo Sweeney, and hundreds of other salon owners around the country who benefited from Our Town America's unique new mover marketing program in 2012. As Wally and Geo suggest below, Our Town America works particularly well for hair salons because their warm gift certificate packages reach men and women shortly after their move, right when they are seeking their new go-to hair care partner.

In order to build off that success in 2013, Michael Plummer Jr. and the Our Town America team announced their enhanced loyalty program to their sponsors that mails additional offers to new movers who redeem their first gift certificate. As Plummer suggests, this loyalty program works particularly well for hair salon owners who must make a consistent impression on clients who demand the perfect haircut each and every time.

"While the hair care industry is recession resistant, it is also fiercely competitive and salon owners face local markets that seemingly get more crowded each day," says Michael Plummer Jr., CEO of Our Town America. "Executing a category

exclusive new mover program that is supplemented by a powerful loyalty program is one of the few ways these owners can secure a significant competitive advantage over other hair care companies in their area.”

“All new movers, regardless of sex, are seeking their new hair care partner and they need an answer fast,” says Plummer. “Reaching them first with an aggressive offer in a warm welcoming package is the best way to make a strong first impression that gets customers in the door. Following that up with offers rewarding them for their first visit, and delivering quality haircuts and customer service, is what inspires long term loyalty.”

Epsilon’s New Mover Reports help to draw similar conclusions – direct marketing is highly valued by new movers. The report, which reached just under 1,000 movers and non-movers nationwide revealed the following information that supports that conclusion:

- More than 53 million people move each year. Most movers are younger people moving great distances who have little knowledge of the local businesses that can provide the products/services they need.
- Contrary to popular belief, direct marketing, specifically new mover marketing, is highly valued by Gen Y millennials.
- The number of people moving has increased steadily since 2009, but new home sales from 2011 suggest an 80% in the past seven years. This means the pool of renters has increased substantially and people move more often.

“While these numbers can, and do, apply to any industry, it is especially important for hair care companies who must reach and impact new movers to remain profitable,” says Marilyn Imparato, Our Town America’s Director of Sales and Marketing. “To generate the biggest bang for their buck, it is imperative for hair care companies to understand how to reach out to today’s new mover in order to make a strong impression. Simply sending a casual coupon won’t make them feel special – they must be willing to make a good will gesture that makes a big statement illustrating that they sincerely want to welcome them to the community and would like to have them as a long-term, loyal customer.”

Milwaukee-based Wally Sauthoff, profiled above, agrees that nothing says “welcome to the neighborhood” like a free haircut.

“We have a unique business model at Sport Clips in that we focus exclusively on

the male consumer,” says Sauthoff. “However, too few potential customers understand that we deliver a unique, old-school barber shop experience and an MVP experience well worth a few extra bucks. The Our Town America package has allowed us to deliver that message to men along with a free haircut as soon as they come to town when they are actively seeking a new hair care partner and it’s made all the difference.”

The numbers back him up. In the last three and a half years, Wally has realized an overall response rate of more than 8%. Similarly, Tampa-based Geo Sweeney, also profiled above, has thrived using Our Town America’s program as his only marketing tool for the last fourteen years.

“My salon is located in a high end residential area where people are constantly moving in and out of nearby condos,” says Sweeney. “Because of that consistent customer turnover, an effective new mover marketing program is critically important to my success. I have been with Our Town America for more than fourteen years and don’t even have to pay attention to the specific monthly fee or ROI because the ROI has been consistently there. I know it’s working because I see new faces bringing in the certificates each month who really appreciate the genuine offer and will come back for more appointments if we deliver a quality experience. What more could I ask for?”

Sauthoff and Sweeney aren’t isolated examples either. According to Our Town America, hair care sponsors using their new mover program have seen response rates as high as 8% very often.

For more information on Our Town America, complete a [Contact form](#).

Source: CBS Money Watch/ Yahoo! Finance