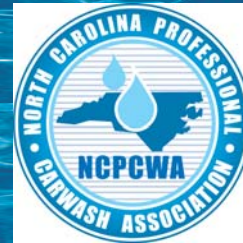


NC Professional Carwash Association



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7300 Glenwood Ave.
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A Message from the New NCPCWA President.....

The NCPCWA has accomplished a great deal since its inception. One of the main objectives early on was to protect the businesses of car wash owners who were being arbitrarily shut down (as compared to other businesses) during the severe drought conditions that many North Carolina communities faced. This was accomplished by correcting several misconceptions regarding car wash water consumption and by establishing a water conservation certification program for car washes to follow. The certification program was placed into law by the State Legislature and Signed by the Governor. The program not only protects certified car wash businesses but it serves as an example of good environmental stewardship for other businesses and the public at large.

The NCPCWA has also provided educational sessions for its members regarding car wash marketing, charity car washing, OSHA safety standards and compliance, environmental issues, the International Car Wash Association and much more.

As we move forward in today's business environment, there are many more challenges that we face. From environmental protection and energy conservation to the electronic communication age we live in, there are many opportunities for us to work together and strengthen our businesses and our Industry.

Please get involved. Talk to your fellow car wash operators. Talk to your suppliers. If you are not a member, join. If they are not members, encourage them to join. Together we can be a great resource.

John Charlesworth
NCPCWA, President

NCPCWA Annual Meeting.....

The 2011 Annual Meeting of the NC Professional Carwash Association was held on March 30th at the Deep River Sporting Clays in Sanford, NC. A delicious lunch was furnished by Carolina Pride Carwash Systems with items of interest following. Some of the subjects included the NCPCWA Certification Program and update, PCI Compliance, and a very educational session on OSHA Compliance presented by Gina Houser, Safety Coordinator for Autobell.

The new NCPCWA Board Members were elected as were the new officers. These can be found on the last page of this newsletter. All members were encouraged to visit the newly updated web site (www.ncpcwa.com) where valuable information can be found. Current members are listed, the new certification requirements and forms are there as well as a list of currently certified carwashes and a few plumbers that have been used for certification. Please remember that you have to be certified for six months before you qualify for the benefits.

A new membership brochure is available on the web site and all members are asked to solicit new members. When the meeting was adjourned, some of the people attending joined in the Sporting Clays event.

Kommunications Korner.....



"Diane and David, I enjoyed shooting with both of you and Todd last week. Diane, you were the best dressed sporting clay shooter I have ever seen; and a great sport. It was a lot of fun. Thanks."

s/Dale L. Reynolds

Left: Diane Deering
Right: Todd Deal, David Cloer, Diane Deering, Dale Reynolds



NCPCWA Certification Program Recognized Statewide.....

NCPCWA initially partnered with the City of Raleigh on a car wash certification program that would recognize car washes that were conserving water not only during drought conditions but year in year out. The Board of Directors of NCPCWA decided that the certification program should be taken statewide and partnered with the North Carolina Petroleum & Convenience Marketers Governmental Affairs team to introduce legislation that would prevent car washes from being treated differently than other water consuming businesses during water shortages.

NCPCM lobbyists met with representatives of the League of Municipalities and NC DENR to discuss the idea and work on draft language for a bill. The LOM wanted NC DENR to recognize the program to give it legitimacy but all in all were in favor and were extremely helpful in drafting the bill.

The result is a state recognized car wash certification program that must be recognized by units of local government that provide water or large community water systems. Car washes certified under the NCPCWA program for at least six months prior to an extreme drought designation will not be required to reduce consumption more than any other class of commercial or industrial water users during a water shortage emergency.

This is an important piece of legislation to the car wash industry. All owners of car washes should take advantage of the certification program. It is protection for your business against being shut down when the next drought comes along. Contact the association office or visit the NCPCWA website (www.ncpcwa.com) for more information.

Doug Howey

Why Doing the Right Thing is Right for the Bottom Line.....

The success of any organization is built on the confidence and trust of employees, customers, and the general public. The only way for an organization to gain that trust is to demonstrate honesty and integrity in everything the organization does. Organizations that operate this way do so because it is the right thing to do and not because of legal requirements. We are all familiar with the fall of Enron and Bernard Madoff's Ponzi scheme. As their unethical business practices came to light, these very successful organizations promptly collapsed. Integrity affects every area of business operations and all customer groups.

Integrity in Accounting Practices

Businesses owe it to their employees, customers, and shareholders to be honest and transparent with their finances. Organizations that "Cook the Books", whether by design or by accident, perform a disservice to everyone. Sloppy accounting is as harmful to a business's ability to perform as the malfeasance of the Enrons and Madoffs. Any organization, large or small, that hopes to stay in business must practice proper and responsible financial management.

Truth in Selling

Organizations that aggressively market their products and services are obligated to deliver exactly what they promise. Whether it is a print ad in a magazine or a video ad on television, the product described should always be what is delivered to the customer. We responded to an advertisement for a new car once. The ad showed a great price, but when we got to the dealer, we learned that they were "out" of that particular car and tried to sell us a different, more expensive model. We bought neither, of course, but the cynical "bait-and-switch" ploy convinced us never to visit that dealer again.

Management Integrity

From customer service to employee benefits, management practices are at the core of organizational integrity. Unresolved product or service issues can tarnish the reputation of the organization, and employees recognize the importance of management doing what's right by "walking-the-talk" and following up on promises made. Google was named one of the top 100 employers in 2010. One of the company's signature practices is allowing engineers to devote 20 percent of their time to projects of their choosing. The program reflects Google's famous slogan, "Don't be evil," and the company's positioning as an innovative leader in everything it does.

Service Integrity

The integrity of an organization is best experienced AFTER the sale. For example, we built a house a few years ago and the customer service with the builder was impeccable until we closed on the property. Every request and inquiry was followed up with quick and friendly responses. However, once we closed on the property, it was difficult to get phone calls answered and construction issues resolved. Following up on service quality after a customer makes a purchase is critical to maintaining and growing a customer base.

Personal Integrity

Business leaders should maintain honesty and integrity in every aspect of their lives. When leaders fail to live up to high ethical standards, the reputation of the organization is harmed, as well. Dennis Kozlowski, the former CEO of Tyco, and former Tyco finance chief Mark Swartz are perhaps the poster children for failed ethical leadership. In 2005, both were sentenced to up to 25 years in prison after stealing hundreds of millions of dollars from the company. The scandal made public its executives' poor business decisions – and profligate spending – and generated negative press for Tyco, which affected its value and profitability.



Product Integrity

Product integrity provides confidence to purchasers of products and services. This is where brand recognition and public perception comes into play. The homebuilder we used was one of the largest in our area, which is why we chose them. When service after the sale was less than optimal, it spoke volumes to us about the product integrity of this builder. Had we known what we know now before the sale, we may have negotiated differently or made sure the contract had language to support response to issues after we moved in the house.

4 Ways to Incorporate Integrity into Business Practices

How does an organization make integrity a key part of its everyday practices?

- 1) Develop a Values Statement that demonstrates the values that the organization operates by. A Values statement helps employees understand the principles used in decision making.
- 2) Create a Code-of-Conduct Statement. This document establishes boundaries for employee behavior.
- 3) Train employees on the importance of honesty and integrity. This should be done as part of the new employee orientation process.
- 4) Create confidential processes for employees to report unethical behaviors. This is important so employees are not hesitant to report questionable or inappropriate business practices.

Business integrity should be a key part of an organization’s culture, demonstrated in every business practice.

Organizations that strive to do the right thing because it's the right thing to do survive and prosper. Those that don't, don't.

Patricia Lotich

Keep Customers Coming Back with Loyalty Programs.....

Businesses tend to focus a lot on getting new customers, but sometimes less on keeping them. Well, that's what loyalty programs are for. If your business doesn't have a loyalty program I recommend starting one. It can be as simple as a coffee card, or as involved as a frequent flier program.

If you're not sure, a loyalty program rewards your customers for their behavior of "coming back" to your business. This is important for two reasons: The first one is it's generally less expensive to retain current customers than acquire new ones. And secondly, once someone makes a purchase they are likely to buy again.

So if you don't have a loyalty program for your business, you're missing out on a big opportunity to make customers feel special and encourage repeat purchases. Here's a list of loyalty program ideas you can try integrating into your email marketing:

- Insider or member programs
- Email bonus rewards
- Happy Birthday/Anniversary emails (your company's or customer's)
- Rewards or points programs/cards (like a coffee card!)
- Facebook or Twitter only offers

Other ways to retain your customers would be offering them something exclusive, giving them a sneak peek or first look, or having a special event to get them coming back and spending.

Two Profitable Reasons to Support Effective Social Programs.....

We all have social and community issues that we care about. A green planet for some, children in need for others, disabled veterans, survivors of abuse ... the opportunity to give back is endless. But what does that have to do with small business?

Well, social programs not only help people in need, but also provide marketing opportunities for the generous, smart and socially aware small business owner. It can be profitable to serve (for both you and the charity).

1. COMMUNITY.

Effective programs provide hope and opportunity for underrepresented segments of society. They help people survive, learn and eventually contribute. Social programs touch people’s lives, and that’s something the small business owner knows instinctively. We see the faces of our clients daily. We understand that the problem we solve in business helps people, families and communities in our way. Our size allows us to maintain the intimacy of service that our businesses provide. Supporting smart social programs is almost a no-brainer for small business owners. In fact, small businesses are some of the most generous givers in my community.

But we sometimes miss the real marketing benefit — and there is no shame in taking advantage of that benefit, when you consider a few things.

2. MARKETING.

When you offer a quality product or service and also support an initiative that you believe in, that’s social networking at its best. It’s your business taking the time to care about both your clients and your community. Tactfully spreading the word helps the nonprofit and helps you. You not only get to tweet it and Facebook it, but you are often included in the event’s or organization’s promotional materials. Remember, that social program typically needs marketing support, too.



Two Ways to Maximize the Relationship

1. PASSION.

Find programs that match or complement your business and personal beliefs. If you discover what you are passionate about in business, it makes it easier for you to weather storms as you build your dream. Simultaneously, if you discover what you are passionate about in community service, it makes it natural for you to give (and promote). For example, if you sell children’s clothes, then support a children’s program. If you sell women’s clothes, support the local women’s shelter. But don’t stop at giving.

2. PRESS RELEASE.

Use a press release to get the word out. Send it to your local paper, radio and television stations, and submit it online. You never know when your news can help a reporter complete a story and give you and the local charity publicity that money can’t buy. Since a rising tide lifts everything in the ocean, your promotion brings attention to the charity as well.

QUICK TIP: Be careful about choosing a polarizing issue (unless you are ready to stand by it or your business is automatically connected somehow). There are some issues that may cost you customers. In the end, you want to be both business wise and personally true.

What You Don't Know Can Hurt You!!!!

One of the most dangerous operations at the car wash is handling and use of chemicals. An important aspect that is often overlooked is proper labeling.

Each label describes the contents of the chemical, how to safely handle and apply it, and general safety practices (first aid) for that particular container's contents. It will also identify any dangerous ingredients. Unfortunately very often labels are damaged during product transfer and general wear & tear. Therefore it is important to periodically check not only the drum labels but all container labels too. If they are damaged, it can be easily replaced by the supplier. We recently paid a large 5 figure claim due to a container that looked like pretreat bug spray but was really a caustic chemical. The employee applied the spray to the vehicle resulting in destroying the entire body of the car. The only solution to the claim was a brand new car. So, not only is having the labels displayed where they can be easily seen and readable a smart idea, it is an OSHA requirement. Also, do not ignore hand held bottles - it could be a costly mistake! Even though many of the contents of the spray bottles are generally harmless and easily recognized by the employees, on a busy day someone helping out may not be familiar with the product and that's generally when a problem arises.

Proper labeling should also include another OSHA requirement, MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet). OSHA mandates that you maintain a copy of this document for every chemical used at the wash in a binder located in an easily accessible area. This is a part of your HAZCOM plan which is where you need to comply with the standard that requires identification of all chemicals in use to your employees. These are provided by the chemical manufacturer free of charge for each chemical you purchase. My tip is - in addition to meeting this OSHA standard, affix a plastic sleeve to each container with a few copies of the MSDS for quick and easy access in the event of an emergency. A few years ago an employee was rushed to the hospital after accidentally splashing a chemical in his eye. A quick thinking manager grabbed the MSDS sheet for the physician to refer to. After treating the employee the Dr. explained to the manager that had he not provided the MSDS to him, the original procedure he had planned to follow, would have caused permanent damage to the the employee's eye. I also recommend that you provide copies of the MSDS documents to your local fire department. This knowledge can assist firefighters in their effort to more safely respond to the scene and it could help them control any potential pollution to the local environment as well.

As you know many times it is the simplest or seemingly the most obvious that gets overlooked. Chemicals are a big part of your daily activities. Sometimes this can lead to routine which in turn leads to becoming less aware of the safety issues associated with the handling of these products. Let this be a friendly reminder to take a step back and be sure everything is as is should be.

Sudden Unintended Acceleration.....

Vehicle Handling Best Practices

In an effort to assist car wash operators in avoiding incidents of “sudden unintended acceleration”, whereby a vehicle – seemingly uncontrollably – accelerates, the following “best practices” have been gathered.

BEST PRACTICES:

~Entrance Care

- 1. Have only experienced employees or customer-owners operate vehicles.
- 2. Have employees wear seatbelts when operating vehicles.

~Washing Care

- 1. Provide sufficient conveyor spacing when washing.

~Exit Care

- 1. Keep employees and customers to the side or behind vehicles.
- 2. Honk the horn prior to moving the vehicle from the conveyor in order to alert employees.



3. After exiting the conveyor, place the vehicle in park and engage the emergency brake.
4. Fully depress the brake pedal – and visually verify.
5. Start the engine.
6. Watch the tachometer and wait for engine speed to decline after ignition.
7. Release the emergency brake.
8. Place one hand on the ignition and the other hand on the gear shift.
9. Shift into drive and, if necessary due to unintended acceleration, turn off the engine immediately.
10. Slowly release the foot brake and proceed.

Electricity can KILL!!!!

Some years ago a young worker at an automatic wash was asked by a manager to remove a defective motor. He had disconnected it from the three wires that were supplying the power but unfortunately unaware that the actual power circuit was not de-energized he continued with the motor removal - at the same time a car entered the tunnel automatically activating the power resulting death by electrocution. He died instantly.

Electricity is an integral part of the everyday life at a carwash. It is imperative that all employees recognize the dangerous circumstances that surround electrical power. With that in mind it is essential to train any employee who may work on any electrical power source. OSHA mandates that all operators have a lock out/ tag out program in place at each location. This is intended to insure that there are proper procedures for shutting down the equipment while maintenance is occurring, so that it can not be unexpectedly started. Your agent or loss control representative will be able to help you design this plan for each of your locations.

Note that OSHA also requires a system for the use of ladders. I am aware of an incident where an employee took it upon himself to fix a potential problem. He used a ladder at the facility to investigate some loose wiring and was severally burned as a result. OSHA requires a written program for ladders at your carwash. One of those requirements is keeping the ladders secured and locked, accessible to trained managers only. In this case the employee was neither a manager nor trained to perform the task. Had this mandated procedure been in place, this loss could have been avoided.

Yet another example of ladder misuse ended in a \$2million dollar payout. A subcontractor borrowed the carwashes ladder to inspect some roof equipment rather than using his own. As it turned out the ladder he borrowed was defective and resulted in a serious back injury. Again had the written and secure procedure been in place this injury could have been avoid.

Why Checking References Isn't a Waste of Time.....

Think about it. You consider hiring 10 people over the course of a year. You check references, and they are very good for five of the candidates. The references for another four don't say much, if anything. One reference for the last person says, "I'd rather not elaborate," — or, "That guy? He's a drug pusher." Those are both actual responses I have gotten to reference calls I have made.

I didn't hire the drug pusher (I didn't need one). The other person was already scheduled for a second interview, so I asked her what the reference meant. Without hesitation, she blurted out, "I'm difficult to work with."

All of a sudden the drug pusher didn't look so bad. I didn't hire the second person either. Was it worth taking the time to call the references for 10 people to avoid hiring this one? Absolutely. Did I save \$5,000? \$10,000? \$20,000? Maybe a lawsuit?

It's also important to think about how you check references. If the person you call wants to say nice things about the candidate, it's easy. Frequently, however, the person you call may be reluctant to tell you something you would like to know, whether for legal reasons or out of a sense of guilt or to avoid the wrath of the former employee. But most people don't want to lie, and there are things you can do to help them help you.

First of all, the best people I have hired have all gotten enthusiastic references. If someone has been a great employee, can it really be that hard to find someone who will say so — even given all of the lawyers and company policies that stand in the way? A co-worker? An ex-co-worker? No one will take the risk of saying something nice about a great employee? Possible, but I think it's unlikely.

As far as I am concerned, I think it's irresponsible of employers to refuse to give references for someone who has worked at a company for years and done a great job just because the legal department has decided that is the easiest way to avoid getting sued. But it is what it is. Still, many employers don't have a legal department, and they can't stop themselves from being human. Here is my favorite question:

"Would you hire this person back?"

"No," is a typical answer. "It's against our company policy."

"I understand. But what if it weren't against your company policy?"

I can tell you this: If the employee was fired, the reference will not be able to say, "Yes, we would hire this person back." You just want to make it easy for the reference to give you a hint, which is all you need. So, for instance, you don't ask, "What can you tell me about the person?"



That's going to get a canned response. Instead you might try, "I get the sense that he is overstating his contacts in the industry. He said he knows every design firm in Chicago." The idea is to ask specific questions about factors that would make or break the hiring decision. If you are checking references, there must have been several things the person said in the interview that you found appealing. Verify them. Many times, it's not what the references say, it's what they don't say. You have to read between the lines.

Even just verifying employment dates and final wages can be revealing (if you want to check references at a current employer, you can make the hiring contingent upon those references checking out). Many people lie on their resume. You make it easy for them to get away with it if you don't verify. Over the past 33 years, I have had hundreds of employees. But I would guess that I've been called for a reference maybe 10 times.

And even when people call, they usually aren't smart about it. One caller asked me if my former employee was easy to work with. Actually, she was very difficult, which put me in an awkward spot. I laughed and said, "Who's easy to work with!" He could have followed up by saying, "I'll take it that she is not the easiest person to deal with" — which would have forced me to give him a little more. But he didn't. He wasn't listening. He hired her.

People frequently call for reference checks and supply answers to their own questions. One caller gave me two or three reasons why he was going to hire my former employee. He never asked me if what she had told him was true. All I said was that she was very nice. I did not volunteer anything else. He got what he wanted from the reference — an opportunity to talk to himself without me correcting him. He hung up feeling good that he had gotten a good reference. What he really got was a very mediocre employee.

If you are not good at checking references, have someone else make the calls or hire an outside service to make them. They are just one piece of the hiring protocol. They are not perfect. They don't always work. Most times, they won't even matter. Neither does wearing a seat belt — most times.

By JAY GOLTZ

USPS Opens Door for Small Businesses to Use the Mail.....

Postmasters across the United States are set to hold a series of special events over the next few months, to attract small businesses into using a new simplified mail service for local advertising. The US Postal Service has more than 1,300 "Grow Your Business" days scheduled around the country to highlight a new market trial called Every Door Direct Mail. The trial, which could become permanent if successful, aims to make it much easier for small businesses to use the US Mail to promote their products and services to local consumers. It waives permits and mailing fees, as well as simplifying requirements for addressing direct mail items.

David Mastervich, manager of catalogues, periodicals and saturation mail for the US Postal Service, said the new service was following one of the new Postmaster General's core strategies — that of seeking to grow mail volumes by improving the customer experience. He told Post&Parcel that small businesses had identified permit and mailing fees as a key barrier to using the mail, and the requirements to have up-to-date mailing lists for local areas. After the registration website for the service went live last week, Mastervich said his team was already getting a good response from businesses. "We're getting very, very good stories from businesses across the country, that this is fitting with exactly what they are looking for," he said, adding that around 500 companies had signed up for the service in just the first few days. "They'll be small mailings, but I think there will be a lot of them," he said.

Saturation mail

Based on the Postal Service's Standard Mail saturation flats service, Every Door Direct Mail is limited to mail pieces with the standard flats dimensions, and up to 3.3 ounces in weight per piece. Mailings entering the postal stream via retail or local delivery units will be limited to 5,000 per day per mailer, but an unlimited volume can be entered into bulk mail entry units. Mailings must be handed into a local delivery unit and addressed to a "local postal customer" and in cases where they are not destined for the local area, will need a city, state or zip.

Mailers must send items to every active address in a local area or carrier route, although there is an opt-out system for consumers to contact mailers if they do not wish to receive future items. However, the simplified addressing service does not require mailers to have individual names and addresses for recipients.

USPS had previously been providing a simplified addressing service for items going to rural routes, but the new service will open up the capability in cities and suburban areas, under the new marketing name Every Door Direct. Mastervich said the USPS has approval from US regulators to run the market trial for up to two years. But, he guessed that if the current program proved popular, the Postal Service could be in a position to go back to the Postal Regulatory Commission to seek a permanent status for Every Door Direct Mail within six to nine months.

Larger mailers

While postmasters will be targeting small businesses to make use of the service through their Grow Your Business events, larger businesses will also be able to make use of Every Door Direct for local direct mail. "It is local advertising mail, but that does not mean that a larger, big box store for instance a Lowe's or Best Buy or Sears couldn't also use the product," Mastervich said. "If



they're doing store openings in certain geographic locations, they may want to use the product to target a certain geographic area around those new stores."

Away from Every Door Direct, the USPS manager said the Postal Service was also currently looking into how it might tackle similar barriers that larger mailers face when using the regular mail, including a possible rethink on the concept of mailing permits, as well as ways to improve business mail acceptance procedures. He said new "Seamless Acceptance" program was being developed by the USPS technology group, which would mean mailers being able to send in data for their mailings, which would reduce the need for processing of the items.

"We're looking at using as much technology as we can to help the larger businesses improve their customer experience, so they are able to give us as much volume as they can," he said. "We are studying it all, looking at how we can make it easier for customers of all sizes."



Why It's Time to Kick Your Green Initiatives Up a Notch.....

Results of the second-annual Sustainability & Innovation Survey of global corporate leaders by MIT's Sloan Management Review and Boston Consulting Group suggest that green practices are taking firm root in the business world. **Nearly 60 percent of the 3,000 businesses surveyed said they are increasing their investment in sustainability.** Perhaps the most interesting revelation is why they're doing it. About half of businesses surveyed said the biggest reason was brand reputation and conveying a green image to customers – not to save money (though that's a common reason, too).

The results reconfirm what many businesses already know: Consumers have altered their buying habits and are paying closer attention to the sustainability messages of the businesses they patronize. It's a trend unlikely to go away anytime soon, and businesses that don't understand this risk getting left behind. The survey results notes that small companies are lagging behind their larger competitors when it comes to sustainability: Only 9 percent of companies surveyed with fewer than 1,000 employees were classified as "embracers" of sustainable business practices, compared to 34 percent of companies with more than 10,000 employees.

So what's a small business to do?

If you haven't started looking seriously at how to improve your company's environmental footprint, start now. You can start by evaluating your company's energy use (even get an audit, if your facilities are large enough to warrant one). Also look at your company's waste and figure out how you might recycle more and send less to the landfills. Basically, you have to get a full picture of where your businesses stands in terms of sustainability.

Once you've gathered the data, it's about weaving together a viable sustainability plan that explains how you intend to reduce your environmental footprint, and then following and revising that plan as needed. Many companies now form employee green teams as an effective way to engage employees in the discussion and get their buy-in. Employees also may have ideas you didn't think about.

And once you get the green actions underway, there's fantastic opportunity to communicate these good deeds to your customers. But there's also a great opportunity to mess up. Many companies don't know how to effectively communicate their green message and whether to make it a core part of their marketing endeavors.

By Kelly Spors, Green Business

Car Washing the 'Green' Way.....

For Stamford native Gregg Mercede, going "green" is not a new concept, but bringing an environmentally-friendly car wash to his hometown was something he thought the city needed. "I was a general contractor for many years, so solar panels and solar thermals were not new concepts to me," said Mercede. "But bringing those concepts to a car wash, that has never been done before."

Mercede, a New Canaan resident, is the owner of Greenwich Avenue Solar Car Wash, the only eco-friendly car wash in the area, he says. Mercede said the car wash is unique in many ways, but the most obvious one is that it is run by solar panels. "When you drive by the car wash, all you see is the huge solar panels on the roof, so that is definitely something different," he said. "These solar panels are what we get all our energy from."

The solar panels get their energy from the sun, and the car wash relies completely on the panels for electricity and energy, Mercede said. "Using solar panels significantly reduces the amount of energy we use at the car wash," he said. "It saves the business a lot of money."

Mercede said the car wash also uses solar thermal power, which heats up the water used in the car wash. "No other car wash uses hot water, because if we didn't use solar thermals, it would cost a lot of money to heat up the water," he said. "But warm water mixes better with soap -- it cleans the car more efficiently. And the way we heat up the water is environmentally friendly, so it's a win-win situation." "The water is also reused and sent throughout a seven-setting filter system," Mercede said. "We use a lot of water, so we try to reuse as much of it as we can," he said. "But we filter it, so it's like using brand new water."



The Greenwich Avenue Solar Car Wash also uses all organic chemicals and LED lighting, which uses approximately 60 percent less energy than a regular light bulb, Mercede said. "We are mindful of the environment in every way we can be," he said. "It ends up being better for the workers, the cars and the customers." The fact that his car wash is environmentally friendly brings a lot of customers in, Mercede said, but what keeps them coming back is the excellent job his employees and his top of the line equipment do.

"At the end of the day, this is a car wash," he said, "and you come to it to get your car clean. So I am very happy that I can be eco-friendly, but it's the end results that keep my customers around."

Editor's Note: The Greenwich Avenue Solar Car Wash is located at 229 Greenwich Avenue in Stamford.

By Kara O'Connor

4 Ways to Spruce Up Your Green Marketing.....

"Greenwashing" – when companies claim they're good environmental stewards when they're really not so much – has become so rampant in recent years that consumers don't know what or whom to believe. That makes it extra difficult for businesses that are truly taking meaningful steps to reduce their footprint to get their message across.

So, what can you do?



Businesses must now be more detailed and transparent about their environmental good deeds. But don't let this deter you: All signs suggest that consumers are paying more attention to the environmental friendliness of the companies they buy from — they're just in need of more convincing information.

Here, then, are four ways to more effectively market your greenness and stand out from the crowd:

1. **Quantify your progress.** Putting a green leaf on your label is no longer enough to show people you care about the environment. If your goal is reducing paper waste, how many trees have you saved this year? What steps are you taking to accomplish this goal? What are your plans for the future? Fight skepticism with hard numbers. Set quantifiable goals, make clear plans for how to achieve them and then track your progress. Writing an annual sustainability plan and reporting on your progress can help flesh out the details.
2. **Get the word out.** Consumers won't know you're taking ambitious steps unless you publicize them. Devote at least one page on your Web site to your environmental practices and lay out your progress and goals. One company known for its sustainability practices, New Belgium Brewing Co. , posts its sustainability mission and reports online, including a very detailed report on its carbon footprint. Weave your sustainability practices into product or service marketing where it makes sense, and try to tell stories that bring it to life for your customers. (But again, be detailed.)
3. **Let customers participate.** Make customers part of the solution by telling them how supporting your business will further your sustainability endeavors. They will feel more inspired if they know they are contributing. Consider TerraCycle, a fast-growing company that sells products made from waste. Its Web site gives an ongoing tally of how much trash it's diverted from landfills. It launched a program that lets consumers join "brigades" that collect various kinds of waste the company will recycle.
4. **Donate.** Show that your environmental concern goes beyond the front door of your business. More companies now are giving a portion of profits to charitable organizations such as 1% for the Planet or the Nature Conservancy. Some businesses support eco-friendly causes that complement their business focus, which is even better. If donating money isn't an option, donate time.

Kelly Spors, Green Business





David Cloer, Diane Deering, Dale Reynolds



David Cloer, Diane Deering, Todd Deal



Certified.....?

Is your carwash certified? There is a voluntary carwash water conservation certification program to encourage and promote the use of year round water conservation and water use efficiency measures. It provides that a public water service or large community water system shall recognize and credit commercial carwashes that have met the standards of the certification program. Carwashes certified under the program shall not be required to reduce consumption more than any other class of commercial or industrial water users during a water shortage emergency. It provides a vehicle for carwash operators to conserve water and receive credit for using water efficiently while also protecting their business interest.

If your carwash was certified more than a year ago, now is the time consider recertification to continue your eligibility for the program.

Contact us for more information.

"Being happy doesn't mean that everything is perfect. It means that you've decided to look beyond the imperfections."



President— John Charlesworth EZ Street NAV53@aol.com	Secretary — Dale Reynolds Autorific High Performance Carwash dlr@cpcarwash.com
Vice President— Sam Allen Sam's Car Wash sallen10@lexcominc.net	Treasurer— Ted Winchester EHW Properties tedwinchester@yahoo.com

Director— Chuck Howard HOWCO chuck@howco.com	Director— Thomas Deering TLC Auto Wash & Fast Lube tdtcautowash@nc.rr.com
Director— Jim Gosnell Etowah Valley Equipment jim@etowahvalleyequipment.com	Lobbyist—Gary Harris gharris@ncpcm.org
Director— Charlie Bell American Pride cb@americanprideus.com	Lobbyist—Doug Howey dhowey@ncpcm.org
	Program Coordinator—Sue Shearin sshearin@ncpcm.org



**Questions? Comments?
Concerns? Article
Contributions?**

This is your newsletter. Any help with local news, area happenings, industry concerns, etc. would be very appreciated. Together we can improve our image and increase our membership. Please let us hear from you.

