

## **My Opinions and the PR/Marketing strategies I used for MHA...**

**Internet (MHA Website) is the Marketing Tool** - it is easily accessible, it's international, it's free and with good search engine capabilities as MHA has had with the expertise of Norbert - it is unequalled for marketing both to the consumer, builder, member and general knowledge. Norbert has always successfully handled the trade-links.

**The Bookstore was an excellent marketing tool.** A consumer or prospective builder just discovering masonry heaters is very eager to learn more about the heater and possibilities. They have looked up masonry heater - came upon the MHA website - looked at the books in the bookstore and want to talk about heaters. They are excited about heaters and they don't just want a book - they want to ask questions and hear more about them and the MHA. Many, many contacts and new MHA members were created from these conversations and contacts. Many contacts were repetitive (and actually still are).

I spent many, many hours on the phone talking about the masonry heater and MHA. Both consumer and prospective builder after seeing the website still wanted to talk about the heater and building one, having one built or being the builder of heaters. If you have to pay someone for this contact - yes - it could be expensive - but IT IS the BEST!

The new MHA Store that **was** being created included the Raytek Thermometer, Moisture Meter etc., plus other MHA promotional items in inventory both for the member and consumer. There was enough retained revenue to cover mailing of the brochures to members for energy shows etc. which I considered the Mason's Marketing Tool. The new brochure lists only the MHA Website as a contact. I never marked items up tremendously - and they sold well. The importance to me was spreading the MHA Logo and website address around at a minimal cost and it was very successful. The combined gross income for all items was \$66,956.11.

**To advertise in the magazines** is quite expensive and if done should guide the prospect towards the website. I did advertise in FHB with a small ad and the website address once. I found over the years that probably 98% of the calls I received were from the website. Almost everyone exclaimed about "how great the website is", the content and available knowledge on it and its links - but they still want personal contact.

I did have success with **Masonry Heater Articles** over the years to the "magazine population"! Marketing the MHA or the Masonry Heater can be combined in the same articles - it is the magazine and who it reaches that makes the difference.

Example:

**Mother Earth News** - There were several articles in MEN about Masonry Heaters in my early Administrative Years. At that point in time - I was still receiving snail mail and my address was in the articles. The respondent here was the person wanting to build his own masonry heater and with a lot of questions. I would give them all of the information - they would usually buy Albie's Finnish Fireplace Construction Manual and/or Short Heater Plans and never hear from them again. Even though they were guided towards the Member

Directory which I ALWAYS did - they were do-it-yourselfers! Yes - they may have built a masonry heater, but the contact didn't promote Masonry Heaters beyond that contact nor did it create an MHA Member or a contract for a masonry heater builder. AND... we don't know what the heater they may have built conformed to.

**Masonry Construction Magazine** - Has done several long articles with extensive photos that I submitted (or members who wrote for MHA) with photos for MHA concerning builds/workshops and information about MHA. This is an excellent resource for the prospective MHA Member and did generate quite a few.

**Log Home Living** - I had several articles in Log Home Living with photos. A new construction magazine is an excellent place for a masonry heater article. It catches the eye of the prospective homebuilder and leads them to the website and a call and to the masonry heater for their new home. Again - after their initial questions are answered, they are always directed to the MHA Member Directory for more questions and answers to a mason in their area.

**Magazines that printed articles (usually with photos) for me were:**

Natural Home

Timber Frame Homes

Dwell

Fine Home Building

Log Home Living

Log Home Design Ideas

Masonry Construction

Alternative Energy Retailer

Country Living

Home

(new construction magazines are a key to leads - always guided to the website)

**Secondary would be:**

Mother Earth News

CountrySide

Back Home

This Old House

(These appeal to the do-it-yourself and do not generate a member or a Masonry Heater Builder contract.)

**Other marketing/PR strategies I used:**

- $\frac{1}{4}$  page display ad in the Timber Frame Resource Guide each year with photo of a member's masonry heater in a timber frame home and the MHA website listed.
- Text Ad in Timber Frame Resource Guide for the Masonry Heater Association with the MHA website listed. \$250 from Bookstore - well spent.
- MHA Logo and website address on everything (promotionals etc.) Supplied from Bookstore profits.

- Supplied brochures to MHA Members energy fairs from Bookstore profits
- Sent Press Release articles to member's hometown newspapers etc. with their achievements (certification), attendance at Wildacres always advertising the MHA Website in it.
- Sent all newsletters and MHA announcements by email or snail mail to MHA PR database which includes all industry magazines, newspapers, organizations and links to MHA.
- Sales/Marketing Motto Dick (my salesman husband) and I always use which works:  
**CCCC - Constant Contact Creates Customers**

If I can be of any further help - let me know. I do have a database of everyone who has purchased from the MHA Bookstore along with all MHA Inquiries. They are in ACT (Contact Database Management Program).

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