Southern Gas Association
Marketing, Customer Experience, and Integrated Communications
August 2012

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UPDATES & GENERAL INFORMATION

Utility / Retailer Partnership Program
During the Marketing Executives Roundtable that was part of the 2012 Management Conference, attendees began discussing the need for a utility/retailer partnership program. SGA released a survey to gauge interest and received a great deal of interest in the program. The purpose of the program is to partner with retailers, such as Lowes and Home Depot to promote natural gas and the products by creating cohesive messaging, training and educational material for retail sales people or employees. SGA members have formed a task force and are seeking additional task force members to assist in developing the program. Margaret von Flatern and Julie Hatfield, both of Texas Gas Service, are co-chairing the task force. For more information about the next call, please contact Veronica Garza.

Nationwide Utility Scam
In the past few months, numerous utility customers have been affected by a nationwide scam that aims to obtain Social Security numbers and bank routing numbers. The scammers claim that a federal utility assistance program has been authorized to help US citizens pay their utility bills. In exchange for the customer's personal information, including their Social Security number, the scammers provide a bank account and routing number for the customer to pay their utility bill. Customers affected by the scam are later shocked to receive disconnection notices, non-sufficient fund charges, as well as late payment charges.

The utility company has issued a warning to customers about the utility scam, advising victims to notify local police. SGA is gathering information to share with its members regarding the utility scam. Does your company have customers who have been affected by the nationwide utility scam? If so, how has your company responded? If you are interested in sharing information or receiving additional information about the utility scam, please contact Randy Randolph. Click here to read more about the utility scam.

Best Practices Awards
It's time to begin thinking about your entry for the 2013 Marketing Best Practices. SGA will begin accepting entries in December. The committee will vote in February. 2013 recipients will be announced in March and will have an opportunity to present their award winning entry. Click here for more information.

SGA members may view 2012 Marketing Best Practice entries, complete with print, audio and video files, by clicking here.
The Power of Partnerships
The SGA Executive Council recently sponsored a webinar featuring Jonathan Tisch talking about the Power of Partnerships. Jonathan is Co-Chairman of the Board and a member of the Office of the President of Loews Corporation, one of the largest diversified financial holding companies in the U.S., and is also Chairman of its subsidiary, Loews Hotels. His company is 66% owners of Boardwalk Pipelines and 100% owners of Diamond Offshore Drilling – so he knows our industry. Jonathan shared nuggets from his book, “The Power of We – Succeeding Through Partnerships” and built some links to the natural gas industry. Click here to see an outline of Jonathan’s presentation. To access the re-play of the webinar, click here.

Executive Newsletter
The purpose of the Executive Newsletter is to provide SGA Official Delegates, Accredited Representatives and other executives from member companies with a high level SGA update. Click here to read the most recent Executive Newsletter.

Conference for Architects & Engineers Planning Meetings
As sales and marketing professionals, relationships play a major role in developing business and also in extending the natural gas message. The Conference for Architects and Engineers is a platform designed to support sales and marketing professionals with relationship-building and networking opportunities.

Every other October, members of the SGA Sales and Marketing Section invite architects, engineers, and other key customers to share in the natural gas message, provide industry updates, network, and earn Learning Units (AIA approved). The planning committee is continuing planning for this year’s conference. If you would like information on how to participate in future planning meetings, please contact Veronica Garza.

EVENT CALENDAR

Marketing and Customer Experience Conference - Register today!
Clearwater, FL - Hyatt Regency Clearwater Beach Resort & Spa
August 13-15, 2012

Don’t miss this year’s Marketing and Customer Experience Conference in Clearwater, Florida! On August 13-15, industry professionals from the sales, marketing, customer experience and communications fields will gather for learning, sharing, and networking at the Hyatt Regency Clearwater Beach Resort & Spa.

Keynote, Ron White, will have attendees laughing and building confidence as they learn Three Secrets to an Unstoppable Memory! You also won’t want to miss J.D. Power’s presentation on Marketing and Communicating to Cross Generations.

Attendees can also expect another exhilarating special event sponsored by Nicor National, An AGL Resources Company. This year the fun is at Crabby’s Bar & Grill, just a few blocks from the Resort. Slip into comfortable beach casual attire and join us for dinner, drinks and live entertainment. Click here to register now.

Roundtables & Committee Chairs
Conference Chair: Chris Cole, DTE Energy

- Commercial & Industrial Sales & Marketing – Dave Simorka, Laclede Gas
- Contact Center Operations – Opal Reed, AGL Resources
- Customer Field Service Delivery – Brian Woody, Piedmont Natural Gas
- Integrated Communications – Loree Elswick, Piedmont Natural Gas
- Meter To Cash – Buddy Flake, SCANA
- Residential Sales & Marketing – Chris Cole, DTE Energy

For more information and to register, click here.
Monthly Utility Best Practices Webinars
August 30, 2012
9:30 – 10:30 AM CST

Don’t miss the next monthly Utility Best Practices Webinar hosted by the SGA Residential Sales & Marketing Committee and APGA. On Thursday, August 30, Jill Grove, Energy Services, will discuss customer service. Click here for the full Utility Best Practices Webinar schedule.

SGA is working on a new electronic certification, in which participants may receive credit. Please contact Veronica Garza for more information.

Consultative Skills: For Customer-Driven Sales Conversations
Birmingham, AL – Alagasco Center for Energy Technology
September 11 – 13, 2012

The 3-day Consultative Skills: For Customer-Driven Sales Conversations™ course develops critical attitudes, skills, and practices for interacting with customers. The course is based on research on the best practices that distinguish high-performing salespeople. Proven techniques help participants intentionally shape their approach and actions to the customer’s values and buying process. The workshop will feature a tour of Alagasco’s Center for Energy Technology. The 2012 registration has been lowered from the 2011 rates. Click here to register for the 2012 workshop.

Conference for Architects & Engineers
Grapevine (Dallas), Texas - Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center
October 12-14, 2012

The Conference for Architects and Engineers is a platform designed to provide timely information that will support the use of gas equipment for sustainable and high performance design, and to build relationships among sales and marketing professionals, architects, engineers and key decision makers.

Come to this year’s conference and bring your favorite architects and engineers to learn about “Fracking Truths” from the Barnett Shale Energy Education Council, the great state of natural gas supply and price stabilization, trends for sustainable design, the latest in energy and cost-efficient gas equipment and insight on the International Green Construction Code from AIA, and on high performance design from ASHRAE.

Advanced Foodservice Workshop
Birmingham, Alabama
April 9-11, 2013

Planning for the 2013 Advanced Foodservice Workshop is underway. SGA needs your feedback to plan this upcoming event. Please click here to take a brief survey to let SGA know which topics interest you.

The 2013 workshop includes a new location! This workshop will be hosted by Alagasco in Birmingham, Alabama. Hands-on instruction will be conducted at Jefferson State Community College Culinary and Hospitality Institute. Contact Veronica Garza for more information.

Marketing Seminar
March 10-12, 2013
Charlotte, North Carolina - The Blake Hotel

The SGA Marketing Seminar is at a new location in 2013 – The Blake Hotel in Charlotte, North Carolina. This seminar includes industry, product, and NGV updates, as well as a motivational speaker, sales tips, roundtable discussions, and numerous networking opportunities. Look for more information and a link to the new seminar webpage in the next Marketing, Customer Experience, and Integrated Communications Newsletter.
SGA Network Announces Newsletter

The SGA Network is pleased to announce the premier edition of the SGA Network Newsletter. It is full of information on continuous process improvement which is our focus for July. Inside you will find:

1. July broadcast information
2. Recommended reading
3. Network changes and updates
4. Learning trends

Click here to download your July newsletter. Click here to download your July broadcast packet.

We hope you enjoy all that this monthly newsletter has to offer and look forward to hearing your feedback. Be on the lookout for another SGA Network Newsletter later this month. Have a question or want to send feedback? Please e-mail Farlene Powell.

Become a Natural Gas Ambassador

Natural gas employees are one of the best tools for delivering important messages about natural gas. Hear from industry leaders on how employees can become natural gas ambassadors and learn how employees can engage their spheres of influence to understand the benefits natural gas can play in energy and in the future of America. Click here to login and begin viewing this program. Contact Farlene Powell for assistance.

SGA Network: Looking Ahead

SGA conducted fourteen SGA Network focus meetings over the first few months of this year. These meetings were very helpful in identifying areas for improvement for the Network. Areas include:

- Governance
  - Build a stronger committee governance structure
  - Distance Learning Committee
  - Network Programming Committee
  - Professional Development Committee
  - Technology Training Committee
  - HR Section Managing Committee

- Communication
  - How we communicate, what we communicate and to who
  - Develop a newsletter

- Integration
  - Competencies
    - Include Lominger model (more widely used by our members)
    - Convert across all professional development offered by SGA (Leadership Development program; on-line programs; Network programs)
    - Be consistent! (standardize)
  - Mapping content
    - Across all professional development programs offered by SGA (Leadership Development program; on-line programs; Network programs)
    - From our content to: 1) individual contributor; 2) supervisor; 3) manager; 4) high potential
  - Tip Sheets
    - Help with application

- Integration with the SGA Committee Org Structure
  - Strengthen connection between SGA Committees and the Programming Committee
  - Better educate Committees about the Network as a resource

SGA is rapidly implementing these suggestions as staff and Network volunteers partner to deliver the rich content developed within SGA Committees, virtually through the Network. Look for more information in future newsletters. I welcome all feedback.

-Mike Grubb.
BLOG HIGHLIGHTS

The SGA Blog is a great way to stay up-to-date on the latest industry information.

- Arthur Corbin Visits SGA
- TPAA Visits the Capitol
- SGA Online Membership Directory
- Erica Yingling Joins SGA Staff
- CNG Motorcycles at the Operating Conference