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White Paper Example

Case Study: Empire Car Wash Group Is Sold on Selling EverWash Membership

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John Grefe and his managing partners operate Empire Car Wash Group, a collection of four tunnel washes in Long Island, NY. They have built successful car wash operations over the past 10 years. Yet, none had much luck with running membership programs.

"We tried doing things on our own, but it was an utter failure," John said. "We couldn't wrap our heads around what to charge for each plan, and how to manage the program on the backend. It was a ton of work, even for the 50 or so members we had. We always thought, 'If managing 50 members is this difficult, how is it even possible to get to 500 members, let alone 1000?'"

When the Empire owners purchased their fourth wash at Hampton Bays, which was already using the EverWash membership program, they watched the operation for a month or two. "It became obvious to us that the benefits from the EverWash program could deliver the recurring revenue model that we wanted," admitted John.

Jump in Membership Despite Pandemic

John and his partners worked with EverWash to expand the program to a second wash." We moved into membership strong, hard, and fast," says John, "and we sold over 200 the first month and were over 600 members by month three."

He noted that the washes were forced to close for two months during the pandemic, but the EverWash database allowed them to send a message to members that any remaining time would be credited when the washes reopened.

"Since then, we renewed the commitment to sign members, and we have reached 1500 members for all locations since the re-opening," John reported.

Salesmanship Is the Key

When John and his partners first met with EverWash's Frank Brigidi, he told them that the key to success was finding the right salesperson. Because a sales-minded sales person wasn't available among the staff, they hired Luz Tetuan, who happened to be a customer at one of their car washes.

"It was hard, and it still is hard to find good sales people with innate sales talent, but we can't allow poor salesmanship to hold us back. We've had to make hard decisions and let some people go," said John, adding that "We collaborate with EverWash to provide all of the necessary training."

Training Leads to Effective Sales Approach

"Working together with EverWash, we came up with an effective sales script for training purposes, and it's still the foundation of our pitch. We simply take a common sense approach: 'Did you know that for double the price of the wash you're getting today, we can sign you up for unlimited washes for the next month? You can come as often as you want!' That has evolved a little bit over time as we offer different discounts to first member sign-ups, but this approach has really worked the best."

Because a full service washes take anywhere between five and 25 minutes, his sales reps have time to convince a customer of the value of a membership. "We actually walk each customer through the entire process, how to use the mobile app, preparing the QR code for the next visit," says John. "Luz will be the first one to tell you what she says, 'Just give me your phone, I'll do it for you.' She sets up everything for the customer, walking them through the app and the membership portal. She'll show them the help line and explain all of the settings."

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EverWash's Rich DeGennaro put together an effective training program that really taught the less experienced team members, especially those who did not know as much as they should about car washing. The training gave them a basic knowledge as to what is included in each wash and what the terms really meant.

"These days when somebody asks a team member a question about hot wax, ceramic, wheel cleaner, arm roller, or types of services we offer, they have confidence," claims John. "They're reminded of their training and remember, 'Okay, this is what I say, and this is my pitch.'"

The Empire group of washes now have trained and effective sales staff at each wash location, and John points out that the combination of hiring the right people, training them on the proper sales techniques and car wash operations, and especially incentivizing them with a commission program pays off for the washes and the team.

Wide-Ranging EverWash Support, 24/7

"Our team members are dedicated and might get very involved in trying to solve customer problems. Fortunately, EverWash's Member Support Team is an outlet for customers with questions and problems that could overwhelm a wash's staff. Sometimes it's simply better if the customer calls EverWash Support," explains John, because if the customer has an issue now, they might have an issue in the future. "The EverWash Support Team can always help with any issues 24 hours a day. Our team can only help them out when they're here. That is a message we teach our team members."

When John and his partners first started, EverWash brought experts from its operations, systems, training, and marketing teams to help. "Impressively, EverWash president Scott Caplan was personally involved," explained John. "He was there for all the rollouts as EverWash. He walked us through a retraining process when we first took over the new wash, too.

"By the time that we were ready to implement the EverWash program at the second location, our entire team was very well versed in EverWash and how it worked. We had Luz selling. In fact, she would sell just about every other person. I was signing people up. My partner, Sam Seguera, was signing new members, and even Scott Caplan was signing people up."

John reports that EverWash is still a close partner: "I am glad to say that our team has direct contact with Scott and his team on a daily basis these many months later. I can guarantee that Luz probably calls him once or twice a week because she just feels very connected with him personally. She knows that every time she reaches out to him, he'll respond. In fact, every EverWash manager picks up the phone right away."

A Win for Customers and the Empire Group of Washes

John concludes that the Everwash membership program has been a big win for customers. "The ease of the app, the fact that they control everything on their phones couldn't be simpler. The fact that it's a month-to-month contract makes it very easy to persuade people to try membership."

It's also a win for the Empire Group of washes. "The EverWash membership program ended up paying off ... dividends isn't even the right word for us. I mean we kind of won the lotto. We've increased our overall revenue in this location by 71%, and that's post-COVID," said John. "Imagine if COVID never happened, and we hadn't lost two months!

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"Yes, wash owners have to believe in the program, stand behind it, and believe that it will drive your success. We say this all the time that two guys on the side of the road with a bucket and a broom could sign up 200 members on a monthly basis using EverWash."