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Expert says do-not-call lists do not have to hurt sales

Telemarketing may be on shaky ground, but referral-based marketing is stronger than ever. In fact, said marketing guru Bill Cates, the do-not-call registry might be the best thing to ever happen to some companies.

Cates, founder of Referral Coach International (www.referralcoach.com), feels the registry represents an unprecedented opportunity for businesses that have until now relied on cold calling consumers.

"The national do-not-call registry proves unequivocally that people - over 60 million of them and counting - do not want to be bothered with sales calls from strangers," Cates said. "And that's good news for companies with sales forces that understand the value of a simple introduction."

Cates says it's all about getting back to the roots of referrals: personal introductions. In today's business environment, a referral does not equal an introduction.

He says that "when companies focus on introductions, they make a quality connection almost every time. The quantity of referrals may go down, but the quality will go up. It's working the referral system the way it's intended to be worked: in a comprehensive manner that gets clients and prospects calling you, instead of the other way around." □

Campaign advises drivers on hit-and-run protection

Many insured drivers are unaware that if their vehicle is damaged in a hit-and-run crash, they could be victimized twice - first by being involved in an accident and second by having to pay all the costs involved.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, from 1998 to 2002, there was a 15 percent increase in hit-and-run accidents nationwide.

The Insurance Information Institute says many insured drivers do not have adequate coverage to handle the additional expense and aggravation of being the victim of a hit-and-run crash. III is working with the Consumer Protection Association of America on a nationwide public information campaign entitled, "Wiser Drivers Wise Up" (www.wiserdrivers.com) to give drivers tips on what to do after an accident, as well as to encourage them to review their auto insurance coverage. □