

Mail-Order Houses

Written by Steve Marr
Monday, 15 July 2019 01:27

Many years ago, Sears sold homes in catalogs. These homes were a popular option from 1908 through the 1940, selling 70,000 homes. The customer would order one of several housing designs, and the prefabricated materials would arrive at the customer's location. Everything from screws, nails, wood and shingles was included in the package. I have a family member who purchased one and still lives in one of these homes. When I visited a few years ago, I was amazed at how good the home was designed and how well the house held up over many years of use.

One may think the day of the mail-order house is over, but not true. Recently I came across some information on Amazon, the online store that helps you find almost anything is now selling homes. I found packages between \$5,000 and \$65,000 for all kinds of do-it-yourself kits ranging from a small vacation cabin to a 1300 square-foot home.

King Solomon wrote, "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 1:9, NIV)

While we must embrace new technology, at the same time we must understand the powerful and relevant methods of the past. For over a century, wise marketers learned that you always focus on the benefit of your product or service and follow with evidence that you're able to deliver what you promise.

Over the last century, the methodology has changed. Billboards, mailings, door-to-door flyers or the most up-to-date websites still need to use the same marketing principles. We must understand that while everything is changing, there are still many constants in business.

I never spent much time thinking about mail-order houses; but if you were to ask me 10 years ago, I would have told you that the Sears' house packages would never be popular again by through mail-order marketing. Of course, I would've been wrong. For years, a few companies have marketed do-it-yourself houses that were primarily log kit products. These have always been a tiny element of the market. My perspective is that Amazon wants to increase their market share of these products by targeting new buyers.

Mail-Order Houses

Written by Steve Marr
Monday, 15 July 2019 01:27

For example, a young person can buy a tiny house, construct the home and live there for less money than paying standard rent or a house payment. This is particularly true in areas like the Silicon Valley where home prices are exceedingly high. My guess is that Amazon is targeting this part of the market.

In our businesses we need to be alert for old methods and processes that can be updated and adapted to today's market. I believe that those selling houses on Amazon have an excellent opportunity to gain a good market share just like Sears did many years ago.