

AMPC – Panderer Not Advocate

By Rick Crawford, PC Synergy
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In their attempt to show how great an industry advocate they are, the Board Members of AMPC have proven just the opposite. AMPC isn't organized to be an advocate because it is a private, closely held company that exists solely for the benefit of its seven owners. The recent The UPS Store mailbox TV ad issue clearly demonstrates their deficiencies in this area.

The action taken by AMPC to curtail a The UPS Store TV ad, has harmed PC Synergy. PC Synergy is an investor in PerSage, which markets PO Pickup, a mailbox notification product. Furthermore, PC Synergy derives a revenue share from each store that initializes the PO Pickup to PostalMate interface.

The UPS Store TV ad built awareness and demand for PO Pickup. In the days following the ad's Super Bowl debut, PerSage received several calls inquiring about PO Pickup and that led to new customers. Furthermore, PerSage management was planning to use the TV ad in their presentations to potential investors. The Super Bowl ad went a long way to validate the concept of mailbox notification. The false claims in the ad only enhance the PO Pickup offering.

Never in my wildest dreams could I ever imagine that a Super Bowl ad could ever financially benefit PC Synergy. The cost of the spot exceeds our annual revenue. And there it was -- the greatest marketing event in our 20 year history paid for by The UPS Store -- and now AMPC wants to take it away.

I believe that the TV ad was good for all AMPC store members. It created nationwide demand for a service that most stores already offer. Stores that don't offer mailbox notification can easily add PO Pickup to their offering. Why would anyone in their right mind want to chance the curtailing of national advertising that we would never be able to afford? Any advertising professional will tell you that the easiest marketing message to make is "me too but better".

The reason why AMPC is no advocate is because they never solicited a wide range of opinion. PC Synergy is a 20 year member of AMPC, we have been a core vendor in this industry for all this time. Furthermore, there are more PostalMate users than AMPC members. What we have to say for this industry is meaningful – and my thoughts were never sought.

I think if store owners were exposed to our arguments about the benefits of the TV ad to our industry, many would have been swayed. But we'll never know because open debate never took place on this issue. AMPC is not an advocate because they do not promote debate on industry issues. There is no vote by a wide range of industry interests concerning advocacy positions. AMPC is too parochial, too myopic and too small to represent the breadth of this industry in any meaningful way. The problem is their structure -- a private company can never perform this vital role.

In their quixotic quest to prove their worthiness as an advocate, the AMPC Board Members have done

this industry much harm. They reacted in a knee jerk manner – an act that would never happen with a 501c(6), not-for-profit, trade organization. And we'll never get a freebie Super Bowl ad thrown our way again.

Thanks for nothing, AMPC.