

Partners in Marketing

By Bill Smith

SOMETIMES THE MOST VALUABLE MARKETING happens through partnerships. Companies that provide products and services to parking owners and operators are often in a unique position to promote their own brands while providing valuable added benefits to their customers.



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Savvy parking consultants have been doing this for years. They publicize the results of the parking plans they develop for cities, explaining their recommendations and how they will benefit the community. This obviously promotes their own brands, but it also provides an invaluable service to their customers by helping build support for the parking plan.

This can be a particularly good strategy for technology providers. Most parking technologies are designed to improve the parker experience, but they can't succeed if parkers don't know about the technology or aren't aware that it's available to use.

Launching a Program

Virtually any parking technology company can benefit from this approach. For example, by publicizing a new installation, parking guidance providers can attract new parkers who want more convenient park-

ing to that garage. By doing so, they raise awareness of their products, while helping solidify their relationship with the customer by helping the customer generate more revenue.

Similarly, a pre-booking company can promote going live at a particular garage, airport, or campus parking system. By generating publicity to inform local parkers that they can reserve parking in advance, a company can create more business for itself and for the parking owner it is serving.

Case Study

Recognizing that mobile payment only benefits drivers and cities if people are using it, PayByPhone has created what it calls the Adoption Success Model, a customizable program through which local marketing and adoption programs are developed to meet a community's unique needs and requirements. The marketing programs may include any of a number of approaches, including publicity (press releases and feature stories); social media marketing and advertising; and event partnerships with local radio, television, or print media companies.

PayByPhone's program for the City of Seattle stands out. In summer 2017, they initiated the Soak In Seattle campaign. The summer-long campaign was designed to attract 6,000 new mobile payment customers and generate 840,000 new transactions. Those goals were exceeded through a combination of marketing tactics that included free parking offers, street team ambassadors, paid print and digital advertising and public relations, paid ads on social media sites, and a custom landing page.

One of the more creative—and fun—elements of the program was the “parking sticker” campaign.

Through this campaign a car was covered bumper to bumper with stickers, and anyone who downloaded the PayByPhone app was given a chance to select a parking sticker off the car to win a prize. The marketing program was featured in numerous stories in local newspapers and on local television and radio, enhancing its effectiveness. PayByPhone has run similar programs in Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada and in San Francisco, Calif., as well as for private owners, universities, and hospitals across the U.S. and Canada.

Through these programs, PayByPhone is generating revenue for itself, but it's also promoting the interests of its customers and strengthening its relationship with the customer. This type of marketing presents a true win-win scenario for both entities.

This approach can be put to good use by nearly any business serving parking owners or operators. Whether your company is a technology provider, consultant, design firm, human resources business—really any type of supplier—it makes sense to consider marketing in partnership with your customers. 

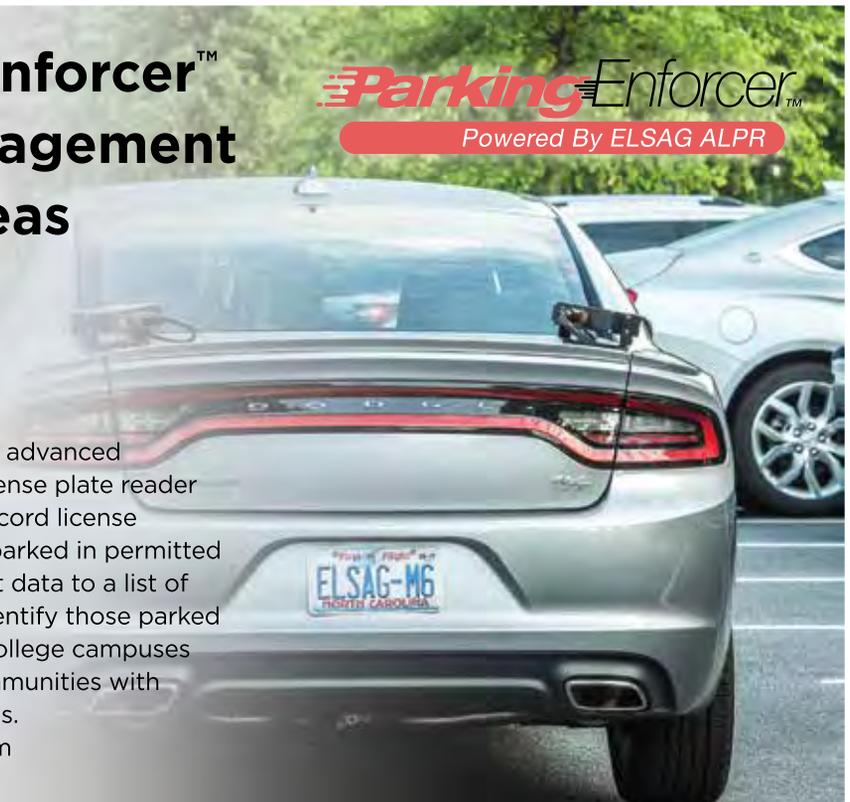


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