

Co-op Marketing Programs An Overview of 9 Top Manufacturers

Co-op advertising is a great two-way street of mutual benefits for contractors and manufacturers. We contacted the industry's top manufacturers, receiving responses from Carrier, Fujitsu, Goodman, Honeywell, Lennox, LGE, Mitsubishi Electric, Trane, and York. We've outlined key points about each manufacturer's approach and program so let you know what is available and who to go to (i.e., the local distributor or directly to the manufacturer) with questions and ideas. We also asked about reimbursement for memberships to ACCA and trade organization in general.

Why Co-op Marketing? The Manufacturer's Perspective

There are some common, and probably obvious, reasons that manufacturers invest in co-op marketing: local market penetration; brand/messaging consistency; recruiting, training and rewarding top performers; and (following from this last) ensuring customer satisfaction and brand loyalty through high levels of service, product knowledge, and technical expertise. The link between marketing and business development cuts both ways, with the contractor receiving support ranging from pre-designed ads to web development and customer management systems; the manufacturer receiving the benefits of positive customer perceptions due to great service and support. So—read on and see if there is something you can use to maximize your marketing in 2017!

Carrier

Carrier co-op marketing funds must be discussed with your **distributor**. Go to your distributor to register for access to HVACPartners.com, the central portal for advertising guidelines, ad kits (including downloadable templates), and other marketing supports. Other assets include My Learning Center, also found on HVACPartners.com, which offers a wide variety of both classroom and online training courses.

The 'Find a Dealer' locator (<http://www.carrier.com/residential/en/us/find-a-dealer/>) on Carrier's residential [Home Comfort](http://www.carrier.com/residential/en/us/) site (<http://www.carrier.com/residential/en/us/>) generates business leads for recommended dealers through extensive national advertising (including television, print, and digital campaigns), which directs consumers to Carrier.com.

Fujitsu

Fujitsu offers market development funds (MDFs) to **distributors**, who must allocate a percentage to contractor advertising. Contact your distributor to discuss fund availability and what percentages of your proposed campaign the MDFs, your distributor and you yourself will cover. Collateral, such as pre-approved ads, customizable direct mail, flyers, and other pre-made materials are on offer to contractors to use as they see fit. Preapproval is required for print ads, radio, billboards, home shows and various other situations and must be discussed with your distributor. Trade organization memberships, including ACCA, are **not** an approved expense.

Fujitsu's 'How to Buy' (<http://www.fujitsugeneral.com/us/residential/index.html>) button on their residential site sends consumers to their Elite Contractors list. The [Contractor Toolbox](#), introduced approximately 18 months ago, (<http://contractors.fujitsugeneral.com/signup/>) offers a wide range of services, including earning points by doing training and registering sales through the site—all of which go towards becoming a Fujitsu Elite Contractor. In addition to training and online sales support, you can access resources like online service tools, customer management of leads generated through the site, warranties, registering systems installed, load calculations, and more. Loyalty rewards can be redeemed for merchandise and other marketing resources.

Goodman

Goodman dealers have access to local accrual and co-op programs as determined by their local **distributor**. Goodman feels this allows for regional programs with local, market-specific options that might not be possible from a centralized program. Recognizing the value to their dealers, many distributors offering accrual programs allow ACCA membership as an approved expense. Dealers may also use funds for training programs offered by the distributor, ACCA, or other training offered by approved vendors.

Goodman does not engage in large national marketing campaigns targeted at the individual consumer, preferring to invest directly in their products and supporting services. Their 'Find a Dealer' link is prominently displayed on their homepage. In addition, HVAC dealers have access to a wide variety of marketing and sales support programs via [PartnerLink](#) (<http://securenet.goodmanmfg.com/>) a registration-required web portal located at www.goodmanmfg.com. Many of the materials and program available on PartnerLink do not cost any funds, either co-op, accrual, or legal tender.

Honeywell

Honeywell provides opportunities **both through their local distributors and directly to contractors**. **Distributors** are supported with marketing development funds and local activities that vary depending on the size of their organization. For **contractors**, co-op dollars are managed through the Contractor Pro buyer rewards program, which rewards purchases through designated distributors with points-per-dollar. Co-op advertising dollars are redeemed by first, checking Contractor Pro, a local Honeywell rep, or the program administrator for prequalified activities and to find your reward points balance. Discuss activities not on the prequalified list with your Honeywell sales rep and/or Honeywell's program administrator. Up to 50% of standard advertising costs may be reimbursed. Currently, Honeywell does **not** offer co-op dollars for ACCA or other trade organization membership, but may be open to discussion on this point.

Honeywell has a full suite of online resources including videos, downloadable high resolution images, pdfs, premade ads, and more. Honeywell national advertising aims to drive all consumer traffic to their dealer locator: [Contact a Pro](#) (<http://yourhome.honeywell.com/en/contact-a-pro>). The link lists contractors according to products purchased, matching consumer need with local expertise.

Lennox

Lennox sells directly to the installing dealer or contractor and **dealers** are eligible for marketing funds to co-op their individual Lennox marketing efforts. Co-op credits are **not** available for membership in ACCA or other industry organizations. Support in the form of extensive technical information and training is available on www.lennoxpros.com to all registered users.

Lead generation for both residential contractors and commercial contractors is promoted through marketing efforts, such as national television advertising (US, Canada), online search marketing, and display ads on consumer websites, national print advertising, and PR activities, strong consumer promotional activities, and has robust, user-friendly contractor locators for residential and commercial customers. Lennox Premier offers dealers a dealer advocacy program which includes testimonials and reviews.

LG

Contractors wishing to promote LG products within their market are encouraged to reach out to their **LG representative or their local distributor**, but the best way to receive marketing support is to become a LG Excellence Contractor. LG Excellence Contractors receive priority co-op through their distributor, as well as access to additional marketing materials, lead referrals, extended warranty for qualifying product, an LG Excellence designation they can use on their site as well as onsite and online training. LG contractors are listed on the consumer-facing site at lghomecomfort.com and mylghvac.com provides 24/7 access to information, including marketing collateral such as advertising materials, product photo brochures and technical specifications, exclusively for contractors and channel partners. LG is one of ACCA's corporate sponsors.

Mitsubishi

Mitsubishi Electric Cooling & Heating co-op funds are available through your **distributor** via a highly regulated annual review and budgeting process that flows from the top of the organization. Co-op opportunities for each region are managed through five geographic business units, each with a dedicated marketing manager in charge of regionally-targeted 'tool boxes' of on-message advertising and collateral, and tasked with supporting local market campaigns at all levels of customization. Distributors generally give priority for co-op funds to Diamond Contractors (authorized installers with direct access to preapproved collateral, listed prominently on [Mitsubishi Comfort](http://www.mitsubishicomfort.com/) (<http://www.mitsubishicomfort.com/>)). Costs for a given campaign are generally handled as a three-way split between contractor/distributor/Mitsubishi.

Mitsubishi supports all aspects of business development for distributors and dealers, such as subscriptions to Mitsubishi's sales tool app, website development, and dedicating a percentage of co-op funding for business-to-business advertising. While memberships with ACCA or other trade organizations are **not** specifically supported at present, Senior Marketing Manager Mike Smith said it may make sense to consider memberships valid business expenses if they provide opportunities for self-promotion,

help a contractor increase their knowledge, or offer thought leadership in the industry. Bottom line—discuss ACCA membership reimbursement with your local distributor! Finally, Mitsubishi Electric's own PR department is busy on your behalf, contributing to industry publications and submitting press releases to ACCA and other trade organizations to support regional business unit initiatives, projects, and people. [Source: Mike Smith, Senior Marketing Manager]

Trane

Trane's marketing system supports **both distributors and dealers** with co-op advertising opportunities. The Marketing Advertising Express (MAX) web portal now provides a hub for Trane's marketing support system. Distributors and dealers can access MAX for needs ranging from processing marketing fund reimbursement claims to accessing pre-approved collateral that improves both cost savings and local marketing efficiency. Anne Hultgren, Director of Channel Marketing, says user engagement with one asset, the Ad Builder template creator, is up 64% since last year—a testament to MAX's usability. While Trane offers many pre-approved marketing tools, input and new ideas are most welcome. Trane distributors **are** eligible for partial reimbursement of several industry association memberships, including ACCA.

Trane's preferred dealers, 'Comfort Specialists', are supported with leads through national campaigns that drive consumers to the [dealer locator](https://www.trane.com/residential/en/buying-a-trane/find-a-dealer.html). (<https://www.trane.com/residential/en/buying-a-trane/find-a-dealer.html>)

York

The YORK[®] brand of Johnson Controls Unitary Products Group operates an extensive co-op program to **contractors**. The Dealer Market Fund reimburses contractors for expenses related to media and materials such as advertising in accredited newspapers, radio and TV, billboards, fairs, local direct mail, signage, apparel/uniforms, promotional items, search engine marketing and more. Contractors also have access to YORK's Marketing Action Center, a marketing tool that helps contractors customize print ads and direct mail, create a contractor presentation book, and more. Johnson Controls supports ACCA's advocacy program, which benefits the entire HVAC industry and supports ACCA in helping contractors build a staff of skilled and accredited technicians.

The [Dealer Success](http://www.yorkhvacdealer.com/#programs) (<http://www.yorkhvacdealer.com/#programs>) program offers business support tools to help generate leads, close sales and achieve tangible business results. There are three levels of contractor participation: YORK[®] Liberties[™], YORK[®] Liberties Plus[™] and Certified Comfort Expert[™]. Depending on their level of participation, YORK contractors have access to a comprehensive list of business support tools and resources. Please visit the site to learn more.

In conclusion...

As you can see, there is a wide range of co-op marketing support available from manufacturers. Many of them are ready for discussions and suggestions about how to

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make their programs even more useful to you, and by extension, to them. So keep current about what is on offer and maximize your advertising dollars!