

Welcomemat Services: Here are places to try in your new neighborhood

by Kathy Mitchell
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New residents are a unique market segment — a group of consumers who are specifically trying to find businesses and retail venues to serve them, according to **Brian Mattingly**, founder and president of Welcomemat Services, a company that specializes in introducing new residents to local businesses by sending out a monthly mailing specifically targeted to those who have recently moved.

Welcomemat Services, which started in 2003 in Charlotte, N.C., moved its headquarters in 2010 to Atlanta, which Mattingly called “a prime market for businesses.”

On a recent visit to Salon Red in downtown Decatur he talked about the distinction between his company and one that distributes discount coupons. “There are two types of consumers, those who choose products and services based on which they have coupons for and consumers who are loyal to a product or business. When people move into a new area they leave behind hair salons, restaurants, dentists, dry cleaners and other service businesses that they might have been loyal to for years. They have to find new places that they like. We help them do that. The person who coupon shops will come in once and next time go someplace else where he happens to have a coupon. Loyal customers who have a good experience the first time are likely to become regulars.”

Decatur, Mattingly said, is perfect for Welcomemat Services. “It’s a vibrant community with colleges, an excellent school system, a good deal of community pride, an affluent population and new people moving in all the time.”

He said his company tracks demographics and other data for the areas in which they do business so they can tell potential customers what they can expect.

New mover information is bar-coded into every invitation certificate, which allows businesses to track

response to their marketing dollars and gives them insight into the moving population in their area, Mattingly said.

Jessica Soler, owner of Salon Red, said she has been pleased by the number of new customers Welcomemat Services has brought to her hair styling business. “The biggest thing is just getting new customers in the door. Once they’re here we know they’ll have a good experience so chances are they’ll come back.”

Mattingly said Welcomemat Services chooses the businesses that it associates with carefully, because they want customers to be pleased with the businesses they introduce them to. He said the certificates that are sent to potential customers offer a substantial price break but are not just coupons; they are invitations to try the service.

“We only choose businesses we know do a great job,” he said.

Soler said she is pleased when a customer comes in with Welcomemat Services certificate. “Sometimes people are a little shy about presenting a coupon, but we know that we have a person who could become a regular customer. We say, ‘Oh yes, we know what that is. Welcome to the neighborhood.’”

Welcomemat Services offers introductions not only to service business



Brian Mattingly, founder and president of Welcomemat Services, right, shows Salon Red owner Jessica Soler materials in the packets that are being sent to perspective customers in the Decatur area. Photo by Kathy Mitchell

such as Salon Red, but also to area attractions. Among its first Atlanta area clients are Fernbank Museum of Natural History, World of Coca-Cola and Atlanta Botanical Garden.

Mattingly said that Welcomemat packets are sent

not only to people who are moving to a completely new area, but also to people who are moving within the metro area. “We find that when people move they are making major changes

in their lives, even if they are only moving from their apartment complex to one across the street. They are rethinking their lives—ready to try something new,” he said.

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