



# MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

WHAT TO CONSIDER TO MAKE YOUR COMPANY STAND OUT

**ABC**  
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# WHY MARKETING IS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR BUSINESS

The roofing and siding industries can be highly competitive and risky, with fluctuating profit margins as contractors bid to win every project. And while simply having the lowest bid may help you win projects in the short term, it's not a sustainable approach if you want to succeed in the long term.

That's where marketing can help. A successful marketing program can help you accomplish many goals, including:

- Getting the word out about your services
- Building your reputation
- Reaching and connecting with prospective clients
- Turning prospects into business leads and ultimately a project win
- Fostering loyalty and ongoing relationships with customers

Marketing is not a one-time fix or something you can set and forget. It requires an ongoing strategy — and it includes everything that's used to communicate to your audience. Your company's website, social media presence, online reviews and even the logoed apparel your employees may wear at a jobsite — it's all marketing.



Successful marketing is an expense, but it's also a long-term investment. When it comes to your business, there are plenty of costs to juggle: purchasing new equipment, hiring new employees and insurance premiums. Those essential pieces help you do business. Every marketing decision you make has the power to help you get business.

Whether you're looking to create a new marketing plan from scratch or refine the one you already have, here are some tips to keep in mind as you "build" your brand and ensure your company gets noticed.

**47% of small business owners run their marketing efforts entirely on their own**, and almost half of small businesses spend less than two hours per week on their marketing efforts!

<sup>1</sup><https://www.fundera.com/resources/small-business-marketing-statistics>

# CREATING A MARKETING PLAN AND BUDGET

As mentioned above, marketing takes time, money and preparation — and the best way to make sure you're getting a return on your marketing investment is to create a plan. A marketing plan's key elements can be divided into four steps: Research, Plan, Launch and Measure.

This [sample plan](#) from the U.S. Small Business Administration can get you started, along with the steps below.



## STEP #1: DO YOUR RESEARCH

Before you identify your marketing activities, take a moment to step back and ask some questions about where you are presently:

### **Assess Your Current Business Situation**

Think critically about your business and what your present landscape is. Where are you located, and how does that affect your business? What are the services you provide, and how might they be the same — or different — than your competitors'? It might be helpful to write a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). This is a great foundational tool for planning your overall strategy.

### **Evaluate Your Current Marketing Initiatives**

Take the time to assess the marketing tactics you're currently investing in. How much time are you spending on them? What are the costs associated with those initiatives? Have they had an impact on your sales numbers? The more you can compare your marketing to the revenue it's helping to generate, the smarter the decisions you'll be able to make.

While marketing plays an important part in boosting sales, there are other ways to assess the success of your marketing efforts. If you find that your competitors are racing to copy your latest marketing campaign, it might mean your efforts are impacting their bottom line. Customer feedback may reveal that some parts of your marketing plan are reaching your target audience more than others.



### **Revisit Your Ideal Customer Profile**

An ideal customer is one who gets their exact needs met by using the services you offer. One way to understand your ideal customer is to take a look at your current customer base. Are they business owners or homeowners? Do they belong to a particular demographic, or do they have specific traits? What are their goals, and how does working with you help them reach those goals? How do they make their buying decisions?

If you're not sure about some of these answers, see if it's possible to have a conversation with a few customers to get their insights. Asking them questions about what they need and how they felt about your services will help strengthen your marketing as a whole, because you can start to base your efforts on their challenges and pain points.

### **Research Your Competitors and Other Companies**

After you've looked at your own business efforts, it's time to identify and evaluate your competitors. Select a few of your direct competitors (ones who are targeting the same customer base) and a few indirect ones (who have similar services to you but may target a slightly different audience, or vice versa). Take a look at their websites, social media presence and online reviews. What are they doing well, and what could use improvement? Is there an industry trend or insight they're talking about that you should also be focusing on because you have a perspective there?

It's also important to note that marketing inspiration can — and should — come from various businesses, not just the ones that are similar to yours. When you see a company in a completely different industry doing something interesting, take note of it — it might be worth digging into.

## **STEP #2: PLAN YOUR EFFORTS**

Now that you've done your research and evaluation, it's time to make some decisions on the more tactical pieces of your plan:

### **Set Your Marketing Goals**

To establish your marketing goals, you first need to think about the overall objectives for your business. If you're a new business, your goal might be to grow brand awareness so that people learn about you and what you have to offer. Maybe you have a certain sales goal, or you're hoping to reach a new audience with a new service.



Once you land on those objectives, they can then be paired with specific, realistic and optimistic marketing goals that can help you get there. For instance, increasing brand awareness might mean launching a new website or increasing traffic to your existing one.

## Decide on a Time Frame (and a Timeline) for Your Plan

It's typically best practice to establish a yearlong plan for your marketing efforts, which could include smaller marketing campaigns throughout the year. Within that plan, it's essential to scope out a timeline of when you'll embark on specific tactics. It's tough to do everything at once, and having a timeline ensures your marketing plan stays manageable — manageable plans have a better chance of staying the course.

## Establish Your Marketing Budget

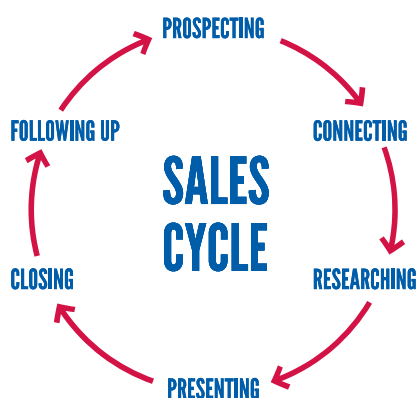
Deciding how much money to spend on marketing is a dilemma for many small businesses. You want to keep costs low as you grow, but you also need marketing to help with that growth. As a general rule, the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) recommends allocating 7%-8% of your revenue (for small businesses with revenues of less than \$5 million) to marketing. This percentage is based on companies with margins of 10%-12% after expenses.



No matter your budget, it's always good to have a full breakdown of your allocations, so you can be as specific as possible about how that money gets spent. Have a plan for tracking your budget throughout the year to ensure you stay on track.

## Organize Tactics Within Your Sales Cycle

Your sales cycle is a series of steps that you perform to close business with a new customer. Typically, the stages of the sales cycle are prospecting, connecting, researching, presenting, closing and following up — and you'll want to map your marketing tactics to each stage. For example:



- For the **prospecting and connecting stages**, make sure you're maintaining a consistent presence on your company's **social media** profiles (you might even use paid promotion to target a specific audience with a post) and that your **website** is up to date.
- During the **researching and presenting** stages, build credibility by having a solid base of **online reviews, case studies and success stories** you can use in a sales presentation or on your website as well as testimonials and referrals to have a firsthand account of your services.
- When you're **closing and throughout follow-up**, have a program or strategy in place for how you'll capture **referrals** from your satisfied customers to aid in future marketing efforts.



## STEP #3: LAUNCH AND MEASURE

After all the research and planning, it's time to put your plan into action — and track the results of how each tactic performs. And because you likely didn't get into construction because of your marketing expertise, know when you need support.

### Test New Things

While it's great to know what marketing tactics work well for your business, don't be afraid to try new things here and there to learn what else works for you. If you haven't thought about [direct mail](#) in years, you might consider sending a limited-run mailing to a specific neighborhood or demographic as a test. If you keep seeing ads from competitors in your social media feed, it may be time to experiment with a few promoted posts of your own. Staying the course with your plan is important, but make sure you're budgeting a little time — and money — to seize an opportunity.

### Track the Results

Track the performance of your marketing tactics to help you evaluate what is (or maybe isn't) benefiting your business. When possible, compare the investment against the results to help you gauge your return on investment.

### Know When to Ask for Help

You started your business because of your skillset and experience within your industry, not because you wanted to become a marketing expert. If you start to realize that the strategy you'd like to execute is beyond your expertise, consider enlisting a marketing professional for help or consultation.

The next section of this eBook highlights just a few of the many levers you can pull in the development of your own marketing plan.

# MARKETING TACTICS THAT WORK FOR CONTRACTORS

There's no shortage of marketing tactics that you can choose for your business. Here are some of the most popular — and successful — tactics for contractors, broken down into three categories: proof-of-value, digital and traditional/in-person marketing.

## PROOF-OF-VALUE MARKETING

Before you start to choose marketing tactics to be part of your overall plan, you'll want to think about how you can prove the value your business provides. Here are two ways to start:

### Create a Value Proposition

Your business's value proposition — the promise of the value your company delivers to your customers — is the most important element of your marketing efforts. It tells your prospects why they should do business with you and makes the benefits of your services crystal clear. To [create a value proposition](#), you'll need to think about four pieces of information your customers need to know:



1. **What services do you offer, and how do they solve your customers' problems or improve their situations?** Don't be too literal when thinking about your services. You're selling more than a new roof or siding — you're selling a solution, feeling or outcome.
2. **How does your business benefit your customers?** Emotions are tied to purchasing decisions. Think about the emotions your customers experience when they receive your services, and factor them into your benefit.
3. **What differentiates your business from your competitors?** If you understand what your competitors offer, it will be easier to talk about how you're different or better. Even if a competitor's services are similar, you might have more experience or use higher-quality materials.
4. **Who is your target customer?** Think beyond age, gender or income level — consider what they do for fun, what makes them happy and what their goals are. Then think about how the answers to these questions can factor into their experience with a contractor.



## Ask for Case Studies and Referrals

One of the most powerful ways to prove you can do the job is to share examples of success stories from satisfied customers. After you finish a job, ask them the following questions and see if they'd be comfortable with you sharing their review with prospects:



- What problem or challenge were you looking to solve with this project?
- Why did you choose our business?
- Were you satisfied with our work? Why or why not?
- How would you describe your experience working with my team?
- Was my team responsive and accommodating?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share?

These case studies and referrals can be used in multiple ways: in a presentation where you're pitching a similar type of job, as a regular part of your social media or featured on your website with a brief write-up of your customer's answers.

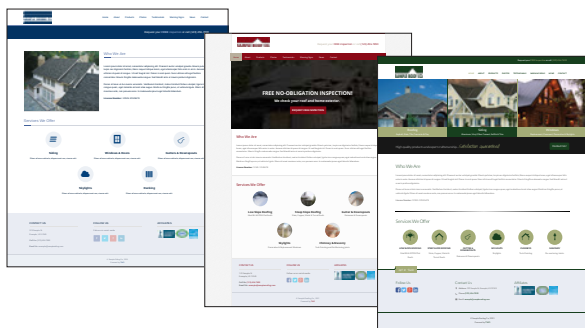
## DIGITAL MARKETING

**64% of small businesses have a website**, while 35% of small businesses without a website believe they are too small to have one.<sup>2</sup>

### Give Your Website a Tune-Up

Most consumers research before they buy — and in our digital-first world, that often means they're searching for a potential contractor online. For that reason, a website is a must — it provides a window into your business, ensuring your customers can learn more about you, the services you provide and how to contact you.

No matter if you have a fully built-out site with eye-catching photos of past projects and customer testimonials or a simple website with a brief description of services and your contact information, it's critical to always make sure you have the most up-to-date website possible.



If you need a website, ABC Supply offers help through our [Freedom Programs](#). Our website templates make it easy to create your web presence — no need for technical knowledge or design background — and can be customized to what you already feature on your site, including testimonials, photo and project galleries, and your social media platforms.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.fundera.com/resources/small-business-marketing-statistics>

Be sure to think about search engine optimization (SEO) when adding pages to your site. SEO is a way to ensure that your website (and business) gets more visits and ranks higher in search engine results. You can increase your website's SEO value and traffic over time by including relevant keywords that your prospects are searching for. [Learn more in this SEO guide.](#)

**74% of consumers** rely on social media to guide purchasing decisions.<sup>3</sup>

### Dive Into Social Media

Social media usage has exploded in recent years, with U.S. adults spending on average 80 minutes per day on social networks.<sup>4</sup> That's why it's more important than ever for contractors to be active on social media — it's one of the best places to reach prospective customers in an efficient and inexpensive way.

Once you've established the social media accounts you'll use, you'll want to make a plan for what you'll post and how often. Post ideas for contractors could include in-progress project shots, photos of completed projects, testimonials from satisfied customers, relevant industry trends and company news, including any community volunteering or support efforts. You'll also want to establish how you'll interact with followers on your accounts and what you'll say when someone posts a positive — or negative — comment. Here are some additional insights on [how to use Facebook and LinkedIn to build business relationships.](#)



In addition to the organic content — the free posts, photos and videos you can share with your customers on your social media platforms — there are also opportunities to engage in paid promotion for your posts. Paid promotion is becoming increasingly important as social media algorithms make it harder and harder for non-paid posts to show up in people's newsfeeds. Paid promotion allows you to pay — similar to an online or print ad — for a specific audience to see your post.

**88% of consumers trust online reviews** as much as a personal recommendation ([ABC Supply](#)).

### Embrace Review Sites

Review sites like [Nextdoor](#), [HomeAdvisor](#), [Yelp](#), [Angi](#), and [Google My Business](#) can help you keep a pulse on the public perception of your business. Second to personal referrals from friends and family, they're likely one of the first places homeowners and commercial property owners go to learn about and hire potential contractors. It goes without saying, but customers are much more likely to hire a contractor who has positive reviews. Review sites build trust, and in a crowded marketplace, that matters.

<sup>3</sup><https://www.fundera.com/resources/small-business-marketing-statistics>  
<sup>4</sup><https://www.emarketer.com/content/us-social-media-usage>



## MANAGING NEGATIVE REVIEWS

Reading online reviews can feel a bit like riding a roller coaster, especially if you receive a negative review. Here are five tips to help you [manage less-than-impressive online customer reviews](#):

1. Respond promptly and thank the customer for sharing their concern or experience.
2. Take the conversation offline by either asking for their contact information and following up by email/ phone or directing them to an email/phone number they can reach you at.
3. Listen — even if you don't agree. Listening can alert you to issues you need to address in your business.
4. Stay poised and professional. Know how you respond will be seen by future customers.
5. Share how the issue will be resolved. If you offer to redo or fix the work, follow through on that promise.

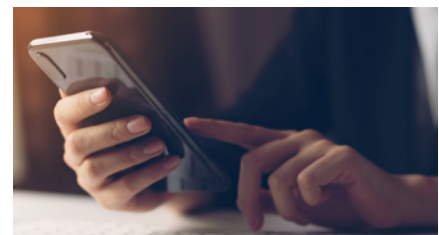
Getting started with review sites is easy — most of them are free to use, and they only take a few minutes to set up:

- Edit your profile with your contact information, photos and any existing testimonials you already have permission to use.
- When you receive a new review, do your best to respond within one to two business days.
- Make a plan to monitor reviews twice a week, so you don't miss anything.
- Ask for reviews by directing satisfied customers to the sites you have set up.

At 54% use, email is the top marketing tool used by small businesses.  
**Email marketing's average return on investment (ROI) is 122%<sup>5</sup>**

### Consider Email Marketing

Email marketing seems like it's exactly that — marketing conducted by email — but at its core, it's another way to build relationships. It gives you a chance to speak directly to potential and past customers, in their inbox, at their convenience.



Here are just a few of the ways email can help small businesses:

- Most subscriptions to email marketing platforms are inexpensive compared with other marketing initiatives, making it big on return — and little on investment.
- Email marketing platforms make it possible to personalize and segment messages based on characteristics — types of customers, geographic locations and more.
- The data available within email marketing platforms creates an opportunity to draw useful data about how your audiences are interacting with your emails. This makes it possible to measure your campaigns and replicate what's working.

<sup>5</sup><https://www.fundera.com/resources/small-business-marketing-statistics>

Opening an email signals a personal commitment: Someone who clicks on your email wants to know about your business. If you focus on having well-written, visually appealing email campaigns, there's no limit to how you can use this channel.

## TRADITIONAL/IN-PERSON MARKETING

### Wear Professional Apparel

It's important to dress for success when you're heading into a customer meeting — whether it's in-person or virtual. Always change into clean, professional apparel when you're coming from a jobsite, and if you're able, wear something that's representative of your business and its brand. ABC Supply's Freedom Programs offer customized apparel, stationery and logo development, so you can put your best foot forward and project a professional image.



This goes for the jobsite as well. Providing branded clothing for your entire crew shows a property owner they're part of an established business with professional employees.

### LEVEL UP YOUR MARKETING WITH FREEDOM PROGRAMS

Low on time and resources? ABC Supply's [Freedom Programs](#) are a collection of value-added services that will help you get your business's name out in your community. ABC Supply can help create:

- Storm postcards and targeted mail programs
- Personalized apparel and stationery
- Jobsite marketing materials
- Custom company websites

### Sponsor Community Events

People want to support businesses that support their communities — and sponsorships are a great way to put your brand in front of people who may not have heard of your company. These sponsorships often come with visual marketing perks, like having your company logo printed on banners or being able to distribute print materials to potential customers. A few options include:



- Partnering with a local school to sponsor an ongoing program or donate equipment
- Joining forces with your local chamber of commerce or rotary club to host programs or events
- Sponsoring a local sports team or youth league
- Supporting your company's individual employees in their individual fundraising

In addition, also consider opportunities to be part of promotional giveaways. Your company's name and logo on a tote bag, T-shirt or water bottle can result in great exposure for your brand.



## Use Your Jobsite for Marketing

Often your best potential customers are those living near your jobsites. Jobsite marketing materials like targeted door hangers and on-site contractor job signs showcase your company's presence in a specific area and let residents know about your services. Inexpensive yet professional, these materials put you in control of marketing distribution and help identify ideal prospective customers. ABC Supply's [jobsite marketing program](#) offers door hangers and easy-to-read job signs in various design styles, with weather-resistant framing and a guaranteed two-week ship date, so you can get your materials out there quickly.

If a massive storm recently hit your area, consider using your jobsite to demonstrate the quality of your workmanship and let homeowners know you're already in the area and ready to help.

## Use Direct Mail

A well-planned direct mail program is one of the most effective ways to reach prospective customers. By delivering targeted mailings to qualified homeowners in a specific area, you get your company's name in front of the right people — and break through the clutter with a message tailored to a potential customer's needs at the same time.

ABC Supply's [target mail program](#) makes marketing your business simple by sending personalized postcards to owners of single-family homes. The targeted owners would have homes at least 10 years old and within a specified ZIP code or radius of the jobsite to ensure homes under warranties and renters wouldn't be included.



Whether it's to share an amazing offer or showcase a completed project, consider adding a direct mail program to your marketing efforts to show off your services. ABC Supply's Freedom Programs offer assistance in creating [customized and targeted mailings](#) that deliver results.

As you can see, there are plenty of ways to get the word out about your business. The contractors who are most successful at marketing create a plan to stay focused, determine a budget for their efforts and choose a balance of digital and traditional tactics to help their company — and the services it provides — get noticed.

## READY TO GET STARTED?

Head to [ABC Supply's Freedom Programs](#) to find several programs that will meet your needs and help build your bottom line — or reach out to your local ABC Supply branch for additional business-building advice.

[FIND YOUR NEAREST LOCATION](#)

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