

# **HOME INSPECTION MARKETING:** LOW COST, HIGH IMPACT MARKETING FOR HOME INSPECTORS



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EZ HOME INSPECTION SOFTWARE

# Table of Contents

Introduction

## **PART 1: Before You Begin**

Attitude.....	3
How to sell yourself.....	4
Getting Started.....	5

## **PART 2: Traditional Marketing Strategies**

Yellow Pages and other listings.....	8
Direct Mail and Print Ads.....	9
Marketing to Realtors.....	10
Marketing to Mortgage Companies.....	13
Marketing to attorneys.....	14
Marketing through clients.....	14
Marketing with your vehicle.....	18

## **PART 3: The Marketing World Has Changed**

The importance of a web presence.....	19
Search Engine Optimization (SEO).....	19
Business Networking.....	20
Get known in the community.....	21
Social Media.....	22

## **PART 4: Creating a implementing your marketing strategy**

Objectives.....	24
Strategies.....	25
Set a schedule.....	25
Re-evaluate.....	26

## Introduction:

Marketing can be a confusing subject. Many companies spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars trying to reach potential customers only to find that it was all a waste of time and money. For a lot of business owners it's a daunting task that can sometimes get neglected. The good news is that marketing is actually very simple. The most powerful marketing techniques don't require a high end budget or a complicated market analysis. You probably already have all the tools you need to make your business hugely successful. In this guide we'll introduce some of the traditional methods used by inspectors and also show you some modern techniques that can drive your business to success. There's a ton of info so grab your highlighter and let's begin!

## PART 1: Before you begin

### Attitude

I know this is a marketing guide and not a self help guide, but it's vital that we touch on one of the most important aspects of success: attitude. Success is a funny thing. You can have two individuals who grew up with the same background, education, looks, and same amount of resources. One might be successful, and the other a total failure. The reason is all in the mind. The failure will try something a few times and if they don't see immediate results quit and say it's a waste of time, then go back to watching TV. The winner will try something and if it doesn't work **find out why and fix it** or **find another way** to make it work. People who are successful know they can do something so they find ways to make it happen. Their minds keep turning and they press on until they succeed. Failures have the "I Can't" attitude and their mind stops immediately thus they have already failed. The same goes for the inspection business. You'll have to experiment with all the marketing methods mentioned in this guide and

try new ideas when you think of one. Keep notes on what is working for you and what isn't. If something works focus energy in that area. If an effort isn't paying off re-evaluate it to see if there is something you can change. The key is to not give up and to be consistent in your marketing efforts and they will pay off. In today's society the "Big Timers" are the ones who have an unstoppable drive to succeed. You have to be RELENTLESS.

*"The brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want it badly enough"*

Randy Pausch

The Last Lecture

### **Selling yourself**

Building a successful business isn't all about having the best tools or the latest and greatest technology. It's not even all about having the best product or service. It's about being able to interact with people. People do business with who they like, and the ability to be charismatic is the most valuable tool in your arsenal. If you're already a people person - great! If you're not the good news is that it can be learned. If you feel awkward in social settings and need to work on your people skills, I recommend reading one or both of these books:

"How To Win Friends and Influence People" by Dale Carnegie

"How to Talk to Anyone: 92 Little Tricks for Big Success in Relationships" by Leil Lowndes.

Becoming more of a "People Person" will not only pay off, but also make your marketing efforts a whole lot easier.

Another point to remember is appearance. You can get a pair of \$15 khakis at Old Navy that work great for inspections. They look more professional than blue jeans but you don't have to worry about ruining a \$60 pair of pants. A collared shirt, khakis, and brown or black work shoes are the typical inspector attire. I bought a

pair of “Boot Covers” at a local farm supply store. They are made of thick rubber and slip completely over your shoes then buckle at the top. The thin plastic shoe covers will rip and come off in a crawl space but the durable rubber shoe covers work perfectly. You can pick up a pair for around \$20 and it allows you to wear fairly nice shoes without ruining them. Some thick coveralls and knee pads are usually enough to keep your cloths clean in the crawl space. Always carry a backup deodorant in your vehicle (in case you forget to put some on). Stay clean shaven, chew breath mints, you know the drill. Clients are making the most important purchasing decision of their life and having a professional image is everything.

### **What you’ll need**

It’s a good idea to check your competition and find out how your company is different. You’ll need to discover your Unique Selling Proposition (USP) so you can set yourself apart from other inspectors. Have you been in business longer? Do you offer same day reports, include a home warranty or deliver reports that are easy to read? By making a list of your strengths you can determine how your business will benefit clients so they will choose you over the competition.

Think about why your company is in business. What is your company’s mission? Once you have a mission, you can identify your ideal client and focus on them. Try to think about what your ideal client will be looking for in a home inspection company and list those benefits in your advertising.

### **As a general rule you’ll need the following to get your marketing efforts started:**

1. A nice logo, business card, and letterhead for your company. If you can’t afford a few hundred dollars to get them professionally designed I suggest you go to ebay and search the term “logo design”. I’m not kidding; you can get a simple logo, business card, and letterhead done for \$20-\$30. If you can afford it I would highly recommend hiring an expert. Be sure to view their portfolio and pick someone who does modern and professional

looking graphics. If they don't have a portfolio, don't use them. If their graphics look like they were made in the 90's choose someone else.

2. **A website.** The number 1 marketing asset to your business is your website. Here are 5 reasons why a website is essential for your home inspection business:

1. **It's where clients will learn about your business.** Your home inspection website will act as the go to place for information about your company. Plus you'll have a company email account which is more professional than a personal email.
2. **More people are finding businesses online than anywhere else.** Traditional marketing methods are becoming obsolete as more people are searching the web.
3. **Your website is always marketing for you, even when you're not-** Your home inspection website will market your business 24/7 and provide potential customers with your information, anytime.
4. **It's the most cost effective marketing available-** a home inspection website is one of the most affordable and effective ways to market your business.
5. **Clients expect you to have a website-** Nowadays if you're a professional business you're expected to have a professional and modern website. It helps build trust and makes your company look reputable. When clients search for your company online, what will they find?

Visit the link below to see some of our great looking home inspection website templates. It's easy to get started and affordable, plus there are no contracts. We'll set up the entire site for you and just one inspection a year from your website can pay for the entire service:

<http://www.ezhomeinspectionsoftware.com/home-inspection-website/>

## **PART 2:**

### **Traditional Marketing Strategies**

Here are some simple marketing strategies that are the “basics” of home inspection marketing.

#### **Yellow page and other listings**

One of the most basic necessities for any business is a listing in the local yellow pages. Depending on where you’re located, there may be several different paper phone books distributed. Most companies offer a basic business listing for free. Simply call them and ask if they offer a free listing.

Printed phonebooks are nearly obsolete as more people are turning to the web to find local businesses. Here are a few tips to get your business listed on the internet local business listings. First visit a few different search engines and view some local business listings. At the bottom of the page you should notice somewhere where it says “Data provided by:” or something to that nature. This is where you need to be listed in order to be found on that particular search engines local listings. You can also do a search for “Top directory listing sites” in Google to find lists of the most popular places to list your business. Make sure that your NAP (Name, Address, Phone number) appear the same at every place that you list it and on your website.

#### **Direct mail and print ads**

Direct mail ads are usually used to promote a general product such as hair cuts, pizza, pet supplies, or legal services. You might send out 1,000 ads but only 3 people need a home inspection at that particular time. For this reason it is usually not worth the cost/effort to send them out. An exception to this rule would be if

you offered some type of service that the majority of the population could use such as energy audits. I think one of the best investments you can make as an inspector is to get involved in energy auditing and home energy tune ups. The classes are usually relatively inexpensive and short. It will also allow you to market to the general population (not just people needing a home inspection). Here are the links to BPI and RESNET, two of the well know companies who certify for energy audits. By getting certified you could offer “home energy tune ups” and have the education to back it.

<http://www.resnet.us/>

<http://www.bpi.org/>

You could easily purchase a list of homeowners who live in older houses (since older homes are less energy efficient). Now that you have a list of 500 homes you could make it a point to send the direct mail out in the fall so they could get ready for the winter weather. You could also hire students to hang door ads for “\$49.00 energy tune up” audits. By offering a service with a much broader audience it will allow you to reach more people. Once you have done an energy audit for them they’ll be likely to use you for an inspection when they need one. Here is the largest site on the net for getting mailing lists:

<http://infousa.com/>

If you’re a member of a professional inspection association they might have their list available for sale. Another great idea might be to run promotions for a “free energy tune up report” with a home inspection. Then you could spend an extra 20 minutes and create a simple list of improvements that could help on their energy costs.

## **Marketing to Realtors**

There has always been a huge debate on whether to market to realtors or not. Some inspectors say it’s a waste of time or that they don’t want to be on the



realtors list. Some say it's a great source for referrals. Either case could be true depending on the situation. Frequently, buyers don't know an inspector. When the realtor asks if they will be getting an inspection, they often ask the realtor for a referral. While the realtor may say that they can't make a referral, they will usually point to a name on the list or mention someone they've used before.

### **Preparation for marketing to realtor offices:**

1. You will need some kind of contact management system such as Microsoft Outlook, Gmail/Google Contacts, or any other way to keep track of contacts. You can also use a calendar and a notepad but it will be much more difficult.
2. Go online and do a local business search for every real estate office in your area of service.
3. Make a list of all the real estate offices and organize them by location. The reason you'll organize by location is that you will later drive to these areas and visit all the offices in that area. If you live in a larger city organize it into sections and list the offices in those separate sections.
4. Create a schedule on your calendar to visit each of these areas/offices every month. For example you might visit three small towns on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. You would then mark on your calendar that you need to go back around April 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you're running a tight schedule it's ok to be off a few days. Just make sure to go around the time you're scheduled to. You can also adjust the time period between visits as needed. Usually 1-3 months is best.

By using this method you will have a schedule to follow and you're much more consistent with your visits. Consistency pays off much more than powerful, one-shot bursts of advertising.

## **At the real estate office**

The first visit is the hardest. One of the most important things to keep in mind is SMALL TALK. Go in, introduce yourself, and leave some business cards. If you aren't engaging in a somewhat meaningful conversation, then you're getting nowhere.

I highly recommend you go to the company's website and learn a little about them first. If you do get a chance to talk to the broker you'll impress them. See if there is anything on their website or in real estate news that you can start a conversation about.

When you walk in be observational and listen for opportunities to start a great conversation. If nothing else at least ask the gatekeeper/receptionist if you can put your cards and brochures in the realtors' mail boxes. You can also ask to speak to the broker and talk to them about getting on the "list" of home inspectors. Many larger companies actually have a list of approved inspectors and it's something you'll want to be on.

Bring a sample report and show them how easy it is to read and that it has a summary page. Always have something in hand when visiting offices. If you go in empty handed and only talk about yourself, you won't get far. You should always have some type of useful information, something interesting, or at least a snack to say "Hey look I'm here and I have something for you". I've heard of inspectors bringing doughnuts, candies, seasonal crafts, or fresh flowers to offices. I once read on a forum that an inspector would buy cases of popcorn at Sam's club and staple his business card to each one. Then while at the office he would ask if they had a microwave. If they did he would proceed to his vehicle and bring them back a 20 pack of popcorn bags. He soon became known as the popcorn man and it built great rapport with the office. These types of ideas and creativity will set you apart from the competition.

There are also tons of creative promotional items out there that you can get customized with your business info to hand out. Just search “Promotional Items” online.

### **Here’s the most important thing:**

When you visit an office, you need to keep a mental note of every detail that goes on there. You’re an inspector, so it should be easy. When you return to your vehicle, write down anything and everything you can remember from the visit: the name of the receptionist, what she looks like, the brokers name, the realtors name you talked to, the receptionists’ dogs name,...everything. This is your key for the next time you visit. The next time you walk into that office, imagine the power of you stepping in and saying “hi Betty, how’s Foo Foo doing?” She’ll not only put your cards in the boxes, she’ll probably also mention your name to the broker and maybe a few realtors as well. Ok, maybe it won’t be that easy, but the power of the name is great. People NEED to feel important and it’s all part of being a people person.

### **Open Houses**

Open houses are great because the realtors there are usually either new or really hard working. Either way there’s potential. Each week purchase a paper and make a list of all the open houses in your area. Visit the open houses and bring some snacks and small bottles of water. Snacks can be healthy (bananas, boxes of raisins, trail mix) or junk food (cookies, chips, soda...). If you bring both you can let them choose and joke about it. Make small talk and hand out your cards, ask if they have time to look at a sample report, let them know if you work weekends or do something different or better than the competition. Always follow up later with an email to ask how the open house went. You can also ask if they have a “regular” inspector they use. If not ask for their business. If they have a regular inspector tell them “if he’s ever unavailable I’d love to do an inspection for you.”

It's about planting seeds everywhere and eventually they'll start to sprout when you least expect it.

Always get a business card from the realtor. Keep these and compile a list of leads for when you have some USEFUL information to provide. Sending out monthly newsletters is a great way to keep your business fresh on their minds.

### **Local realtor organizations and presentations**

Some local board of realtors allow inspectors to join as full members or affiliate members, depending on the area. This is another great way to get known in the local real estate community. You could offer classes to realtors such as "How to prepare a home for an inspection". There will always be new realtors wanting to attend classes and new realtors are potential referral partners for your business. Always get a card after the class and follow up with them later.

### **Marketing to Mortgage companies**

Sometimes banks and mortgage companies can be a good source of referrals. Search your local market for "banks" and "mortgage brokers" and then visit each establishment to speak with brokers. You can also set a schedule to return but don't go as often as you would to a real estate office. Most of the time mortgage brokers don't get as much of an opportunity to refer to home inspectors as realtors do, but it still may be worth the effort.

The office presentation should be similar to real estate offices where you go in, introduce yourself, make small talk, and then hand out your materials.

## **Marketing to Attorneys**

Marketing to attorneys can bring you some business, mainly from investors and For Sale By Owners (FSBO's). Search local listings online or your phone book yellow pages for Real Estate Services, Closing Attorneys, or Real Estate Attorneys. When talking to attorneys focus on the fact that you are objective, and that you stick to the facts.

I've also received some business from wills/trust/estate attorneys doing sellers inspections. When they have a house they need to sell it makes for a much smoother transaction if they have the house in good shape before they list it.

## **Marketing through clients**

### **At the inspection**

One of the greatest marketing opportunities you'll have is with your existing clients. Don't worry if you don't have any existing clients. When you get a few this information will help you turn them into more referrals. Always leave a few of your business cards on the kitchen counter for every inspection you do. For a residential inspection there are usually four parties involved: the buyer, the seller, the buyer's agent, and the seller's agent. More than likely there will only be one or two present during the inspection. Keep in mind that even the parties not present are potential leads, because now you have an excuse to present yourself to them later. Make it a point to find out who the realtors are and then follow up by contacting them either by phone, email, or in person. If the buyer's agent is at the inspection take the opportunity to introduce yourself and make small talk for a while. Give them a business card, but no other materials. Why would you do this? Because later you can use brochures as an excuse to go by their office and potentially meet some of their coworkers.

As a general rule you don't want to act too friendly with the sellers or the seller's agent while at the inspection. The buyers might feel like you're friends with the sellers, which will leave them with a bad taste in their mouth. It is ok, however, to contact the seller's agent after the inspection. Make it a point to contact both real estate agents after the inspection. Be sure when you contact them you mention the client or address you did the inspection for. This is what we'll call a connection. Connections are extremely important because it allows the person to hear a familiar name, which eases resistance. "Betty told me to come see you", or "I just talked to Mark Smith and he said you needed a plumber", or "we mow Joe and Mary's yard next door and we can go ahead and get yours if you'd like". Get the picture? If you contact someone with no "connection" you're just another stranger trying to sell something.

Here is an example of how you can use connections to market to several people.

1. You do an inspection for a buyer named John at 301 W Main St.
2. John is the only one at the inspection but you ask how he heard about you. If he says friend, coworker, or anyone besides his agent then you ask him who his agent is. Also, look for a sign in the yard with a contact number to the seller's agent. Now you have two realtors to target.
3. Call the buyer's agent after the inspection and say something like this:

"Hi Tracy, I just did an inspection for your client John Smith and was wondering if I could drop by some cards and brochures at your office. "Sure you can..."

When contacting the seller's agent:

"Hi Tina, I just did an inspection on you listing at 301 W Main St. and was wondering if I could drop by some cards and brochures at your office. "Sure you can..."

4. Go to their office and tell the gatekeeper something like this:

“Hi. Tina Williams said to drop off some cards and brochures, would you care if I left some in the other realtors boxes as well?”

Just like that - you're in the door! You aren't just some stranger walking in off the street, you have a name with you. You never lied or made anything up you just played it smart. By constantly looking for and then using these types of connections, you will have an easier time getting people to open up to you.

### **How to get direct referrals from existing clients**

One of the most important things you need to do to get referrals from existing clients is to keep your name (and your business) on their mind. If it's been a while most homeowners have no idea who did their previous inspection. When someone asks them they'll stumble around and try to find the inspection report and more than likely it's packed away in storage or at the back of a file cabinet somewhere. That inspector just lost a referral. Ouch. Here is a great way to significantly increase your referrals from existing clients:

Today, most reports are sent out via email. Ask your client for their email and after they give it to you say something like this:

“We have a home maintenance newsletter that we send once a month with reminders and household tips. Would you like me to add you to it?”

Most clients will say yes. Now you have their email and you have their permission to send them an email once a month. The next time someone asks who inspected their home they are likely to remember you (which is the goal). The key is to provide useful information to the client. By useful I mean anything that could be of use to the client and does not try to sell them anything. It doesn't have to be long or extensive. Just a simple text article with two or three paragraphs of useful information should do. If you need some material to send out, visit our website where you can purchase simple articles that you can distribute to clients:

<http://www.ezhomeinspectionsoftware.com/home-inspection-marketing/>

The idea is to provide some simple and useful info to make the person say “wow that’s neat - who sent it?”

A politician was recently campaigning in my area. She sent out a small blue book with phone numbers to places like libraries and local government offices. When I received it I thought “I can use this”. Did it make me vote for her? No. But it did get me to see who sent it and research who she was and what she stood for. The most powerful form of marketing is word of mouth so use it to your full advantage.

### **Marketing with your vehicle**

Vehicle wraps and magnets are a great way to promote your business if you have a nice looking vehicle. If your ride is a little rough around the edges it may do more harm than good. Full vehicle wraps typically last 5-10 years and cost around \$1,000 - \$2,000. Although they are a little expensive, they will make your vehicle stand out and draw a lot of attention, putting you in front of 1,000’s of potential customers. A less expensive route would be to get some vehicle magnets. These are a great choice if you are on a lower budget and still want your company name on your vehicle. As with all signs make sure you include your business name and number with a common font that is easy to read and large enough to see from 10-15 feet. I’ve driven by businesses before that had a sign written in a strange script that wasn’t even legible. If people can’t read your sign, it’s a waste of money.



## **PART 3:**

# **The Marketing World Has Changed**

Our society is in the middle of a revolution. The way people interact has completely changed from what it was 10 years ago. Marketing used to be all about radio, TV, newspaper ads, or direct mail. But these are interruptive methods, and nobody seems to appreciate them anymore (if they ever did). People are becoming immune to these interruptive messages, and traditional marketing is dying a slow (but deserved) death. Services like TiVo and On-Demand allow consumers to ignore unwanted and interruptive TV commercials. It's hard for radio stations to get their message out to people. They are too busy listening to their iPods and MP3 players. Telemarketers get hung up on, and junk mail gets tossed in the trash. People shop and choose services differently, so businesses must adapt to be successful. It's especially difficult for home inspectors to use traditional marketing because it's such a niche market. The likelihood of an ad getting to a customer that needs an inspection is slim to none. For this reason, you must focus your time and energy on getting in front of the people that are looking for your services.

### **The importance of Web Presence**

First, let's take a look at how we buy. If you need a product or service, how do you make your decision? Most will get online and do a local search or browse the web for information on the product or service. They might call friends or family members or get on a social media site to post a question. So aside from all the marketing methods mentioned in the first part of this guide, there are a lot of other things you can do to get found by potential customers.

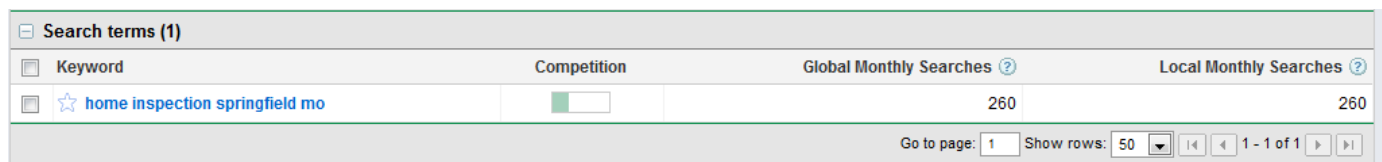
As stated before, a professional looking website is critical, but it means nothing if people never see it.


When you go to a search engine such as Google and type in a search term you'll get a list of about 10 sites on the first page. About 90% of the business will go to

these first 10 listings. That's why it is very important that your site is within the top ten when people search for your service. The process of getting your site listed at the top is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

## Search Engine Optimization

Springfield, MO has a population of about 150,000 people. By using Google's keyword search tool I can see that an average of 260 people search Google for the term "Home Inspection Springfield MO" each month. Keep in mind these are only searches on Google not including Yahoo, Bing, AOL... If we take this and other search terms into consideration there are probably around 400 or more. So that's 400 potential customers on the net looking for an inspection in Springfield per month.



Search terms (1)			
Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches ?	Local Monthly Searches ?
home inspection springfield mo		260	260

Go to page: 1 Show rows: 50 1 - 1 of 1

Now do you see the importance of having a website? There is free information all over the web on SEO that can teach you how to get your website ranked higher. A great book that is very short and easy to read is called "SEO Made Simple" by Michael H. Fleischner. It's less than 100 pages and will give you a good understanding of SEO.

I also recommend that you research the local search listings I mentioned previously in this guide (under yellow pages). Most of the time, local listings will appear before anything else under search results, so your business listing needs to be there.

# Networking

The networking we're talking about here has nothing to do with your computer LAN system. It's about connecting with people. Word of mouth is one of the least expensive and most powerful forms of advertising out there.

## Business Networking Groups

When I first started inspecting homes I had a friend who was in a local networking group called BNI. At first, it sounded like a gimmick. It costs around \$400 to join for a year and I was hesitant to spend that kind of money with no guarantees. I finally took the plunge and joined. It turned out to be one of the best investments I have ever made. Within the first month I got 4 inspections, which paid for my membership fees and netted me a \$600 profit. By joining a local networking group, you will instantly have 20-50 people advertising your business for you. Another great benefit of networking groups is the possibility to make valuable connections. Most chapters have representatives from the local areas leading real estate and mortgage companies.

Another great organization to join is your local Chamber of Commerce. People often contact the chamber or go online to find reputable companies. There are always realtors in the chamber so it might also be a great way to connect with them.

## Get known in your community

A great way to drum up some business is to become well-known in the local community. Start off by creating a 30 minute presentation about some kind of useful topic. A few ideas include:

How to childproof your home  
How to make sure your home is safe  
Seasonal home maintenance workshops

When you provide useful information, people will come to you. Contact your local community center or library to see if they'll let you have a meeting room for free (most will since you're not charging people to attend). Once you get people to show up make sure to get their email and get their approval to put them on your monthly home maintenance email list. By holding these simple 30 minute seminars you'll be getting yourself out there and on peoples' minds. When they need an inspection or know someone who does they'll think of you.

## **Social Media**

Social media has changed the world. Sites such as Twitter and Facebook are having the same effect email did 15 years ago - it's blowing up the web! If you don't already have a Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter account, I highly recommend getting one. First, you'll need to decide on your username. Use the same name across all social media platforms. Make sure your username is simple and easy to remember. Once you've created your profiles be sure to fill in the short description about your company and add a link to your website. Use your logo for the profile picture.

Now that you've got your profiles set up it's time to put them to use. The entire reason for being on social media sites is because that's where people "hang out" now. And I'm not just talking about school kids. The fastest growing demographic on social media sites are adults. These are your potential customers! The best method for social media is to pick one platform and focus on it 100% until you get the hang of it, then try a second one. If you jump into all three at once it can be overwhelming. Your strategy for social media should be to focus on consistency. Instead of getting on one day a week for 5 hours it's better to get on 5 days a week for one hour each day.

## **Facebook**

Imagine setting up a Facebook page for your inspection company and then becoming the “go to” guy for all questions related to the home. Home maintenance, home safety, household tips and ideas, inspection questions... Users on Facebook can become “fans” of your business page, and you should send a request to every person you do an inspection for. When someone becomes a fan of your profile it’s like a ripple effect, all their friends and family will see it and maybe a few of them will also add you.

Another thing you’ll want to do is join any regional networks on Facebook that would be a good fit for you. First go to “My Account”, then “Account Settings”, then “Networks”. Do a search for “real” to see any real estate or realty networks in your area. Also join any mortgage, lawyer, or any other networks you think there would be potential connections. Join them and start making small talk to the members and providing useful info. Not many other inspectors will be doing this so it will set you apart from the competition.

## **Twitter**

Twitter is a site that allows you to set up a free profile and then write small posts of 140 characters or less. A few years ago, Twitter was primarily used for telling others how your day was going and giving them status updates on what you plan to eat for lunch. Today, a lot of businesses have learned the power of twitter and have reaped the benefits. Twitter has a great local search feature that you can use to search companies and people in your area. Do a search for real estate related profiles and then “follow” them. A great thing about Twitter is that it allows for one-way relationships. That way whenever people tweet something you’ll see it and can reply to it. Also, look at their profile and see who else is following them - and who they are following. By digging deeper you can find an entire list of related profiles in your area that you can follow and connect with. The main idea is to interact with them so they’ll want to know who you are. When posting your

own tweets, don't advertise all the time. Provide useful information, such as a handy household tip. One final note: for every one tweet that advertises or promotes your business, you should send ten that don't.

## **LinkedIn**

Another great site for social networking is called LinkedIn. LinkedIn is more geared toward business and can be a great source for networking with local professionals. Create a free LinkedIn account and start connecting to people in your area.

## **General rules to follow**

The whole idea of social networking is to extend your reach of potential clients. Hand out cards and meet people in person during business hours. Then hit the social networking sites for a few hours in the evening. By consistently networking and planting seeds, your business will grow. Find out who the big companies are in your area that could pass business to you and then seek them out using social media. Be kind, listen, participate, open up, and tell your story. Do this, and people will want to connect with you.

## **PART 4:**

### **Creating a implementing your marketing strategy**

One of the most important things you can do for your business is create a plan of action. Everything you've learned means nothing unless you put it into action. The

key is to take a few important strategies and then create a plan to implement them on a regular basis.

### **Step One: Pick one or two key objectives**

The first step you need to do is decide on two key objectives you'd like to achieve. The acronym SMART can help you create good objectives:

Specific: Be specific about what you want to achieve. Instead of saying "get more inspections each month" you should say "get 15 more inspections a month".

Measureable: You should make your objective measureable, such as 20 more or 15% more.

Achievable: Make sure the objective is actually possible.

Realistic: It should be difficult enough to present a challenge, but not be demotivating.

Timed: Set a time period for which the objective should be achieved. Three months, six months, a year...

Here are a few examples of objectives:

Do 25 inspections a month by next year

Get 500 people on my e-newsletter mailing list by June

Double my referrals from realtors within six months

Increase referrals from existing clients by 30% this year

Get 10 inspections a month other than realtor referrals

### **Step Two: Choose two or three strategies for each objective**

Once you decide on a few solid objectives it's time to come up with some strategies to achieve your objectives. Strategies should be thought out and created to directly achieve the objective. For example, if one of my objectives was to double my referrals from realtors within six months I might try these strategies:

Spend 1 hour a day on Facebook and twitter connecting with realtors. Find, follow, listen, comment, and provide useful information...

Visit real estate offices and open houses on a set schedule to promote your business.

Give two presentations a month with the local real estate board.

### **Step Three: Set a schedule**

Now that you know your strategies, it's time to put them on a schedule. Get a calendar large enough to write on or use the calendar on your phone or computer. Schedule each of your strategies and stay consistent. A good rule of thumb is to fill out a calendar for about three months. This way you won't get overwhelmed with creating a whole years schedule and you can make changes to the next quarter if you need to.

Another great method to keep you on track is to create a small "notes" sheet that contains the key points for each strategy. Carry this in your vehicle and post one on your office wall. It will serve as a constant reminder to keep you on track and help you succeed in your strategies.

### **Step Four: Re-evaluate**

Something you must do for a successful marketing campaign is to track where your clients are coming from. Whenever you get an inspection ALWAYS ask where they heard about you. Make a note and keep a tally of where you're getting your clients from. This way, you can look at the statistics and see if you're on track with your objectives. If you notice you're getting a lot of customers from one particular area you'll want to focus more energy in that area. It's sort of like digging for gold. If you find gold, you'll be hitting that area a lot harder, right?



If something isn't working then give it time. After 2-3 months if you still aren't seeing results consider changing it or trying a different strategy altogether. Some strategies work better than others depending on the environment, so there will always be some trial and error. People change, the economy changes, society changes, and your business needs to be constantly evolving. It's just part of the equation and those who can roll with the punches will succeed.

## **Be relentless**

If you take only one thing from this marketing guide remember this: Determination can take you farther than anything else. There will be times when business is slow and you've visited 100 offices and feel you haven't received one call from it. It happens in every business. There will be road blocks but the businesses that succeed are the ones with the ability to push forward and adapt.

There's always potential to grow, especially in slow times. View that potential as an opportunity and get excited about it. Choose some strategies, set a plan, and go out fighting with a positive attitude. If something isn't working try to figure out why and fix it or can the idea and try a different strategy. Stay relentless, adapt, and always work to market your business on a consistent basis. Do this and your business WILL succeed.