

6 Ways to Grow Your Business

A Comprehensive Guide for Trades and Service Business Owners

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Introduction

As a business owner in the trades or service industry, you face unique challenges that office-based businesses simply don't understand. You're dealing with job sites, equipment, weather delays, and the constant pressure to deliver quality work while managing costs and growing your business.

After 23 years of coaching businesses and working specifically with trades and service companies, I've identified six proven strategies that consistently drive growth, increase profits, and give owners more control over their businesses.

These aren't theoretical concepts – they're practical, field-tested strategies that have helped hundreds of business owners like you break through growth plateaus and build the businesses they originally envisioned.

Way #1: Master Your Numbers - The Foundation of Growth

The Problem: Most trades business owners are flying blind. They know if they're busy, but they don't know if they're profitable. They can tell you the cost of materials but not their true hourly rate or customer lifetime value.

The Solution: Implement a simple but comprehensive number tracking system.

Key Metrics to Track Daily:

- Revenue per job
- Gross profit margin per job type
- Labor hours vs. billable hours
- Materials cost as % of total job
- Customer acquisition cost

Key Metrics to Track Weekly:

- Conversion rate (quotes to sales)
- Average transaction value
- Jobs completed vs. jobs quoted
- Cash flow position
- Outstanding receivables

Key Metrics to Track Monthly:

- Customer lifetime value
- Repeat customer percentage
- Referral rate
- Profit per customer segment
- Return on marketing investment

Implementation Steps:

1. **Set up a simple tracking system** (spreadsheet or basic software)
2. **Assign someone to update numbers daily** (even if it's you initially)
3. **Review numbers weekly** and identify trends
4. **Make decisions based on data**, not gut feelings

Real Example:

Mark, a plumbing contractor, discovered he was losing money on small residential jobs but making excellent margins on commercial work. By tracking his numbers, he shifted focus to commercial clients and increased profits by 40% while working fewer hours.

Way #2: Systemize Your Sales Process

The Problem: Most trades businesses treat every sale as a unique event. There's no consistent process, no standard presentation, and no systematic follow-up. This leads to inconsistent results and missed opportunities.

The Solution: Create a repeatable, scalable sales system that works whether you're personally involved or not.

The 5-Step Sales System:

Step 1: Initial Contact Protocol

- **Response time standard** (within 2 hours maximum)
- **Information gathering checklist**
- **Appointment setting script**
- **Customer information database entry**

Step 2: Site Visit/Assessment Process

- **Professional appearance standards**

- **Assessment checklist**
- **Photo documentation process**
- **Customer needs identification questions**

Step 3: Quote Presentation System

- **Standardized quote format**
- **Three-tier pricing options** (Good/Better/Best)
- **Value proposition presentation**
- **Objection handling scripts**

Step 4: Follow-Up Sequence

- **24-hour follow-up call**
- **3-day email follow-up**
- **7-day value-add follow-up**
- **Monthly stay-in-touch system**

Step 5: Closing and Onboarding

- **Contract signing process**
- **Project timeline communication**
- **Customer expectation setting**
- **Project kickoff checklist**

Implementation Tips:

- **Train every team member** on the system
 - **Create scripts and checklists** for consistency
 - **Track conversion rates** at each step
 - **Continuously refine** based on results
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Way #3: Implement Strategic Pricing

The Problem: Most trades businesses price based on what competitors charge or what they think customers will pay. This leads to a race to the bottom and compressed margins.

The Solution: Implement value-based pricing that reflects the true worth of your services.

Value-Based Pricing Framework:

Step 1: Understand Your True Costs

- **Direct labor costs** (including benefits and taxes)
- **Materials and supplies**
- **Equipment depreciation and maintenance**
- **Overhead allocation**
- **Desired profit margin**

Step 2: Identify Your Unique Value Propositions

- **Quality guarantees**
- **Speed of service**
- **Specialized expertise**
- **Customer service excellence**
- **Additional services bundled**

Step 3: Create Tiered Pricing Options

- **Basic Service:** Meets minimum requirements
- **Standard Service:** Includes value-adds and guarantees
- **Premium Service:** Full-service solution with extras

Step 4: Present Price with Confidence

- **Focus on value delivered**, not cost breakdown

- **Use anchoring** (present highest price first)
- **Explain what's included** at each level
- **Handle price objections** with value reminders

Pricing Psychology Tips:

- **Bundle services** to increase perceived value
 - **Use odd numbers** (2,497 *vs.* 2,500)
 - **Offer payment plans** to reduce price resistance
 - **Create urgency** with limited-time offers
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Way #4: Build Referral Systems

The Problem: Most businesses hope for referrals but don't have systems to generate them consistently. They're missing out on the highest-quality, lowest-cost leads available.

The Solution: Create systematic approaches to generating, tracking, and rewarding referrals.

The Referral Generation System:

Step 1: Identify Your Best Referral Sources

- **Past customers** who were highly satisfied
- **Industry partners** (suppliers, complementary trades)
- **Professional networks** (accountants, lawyers, real estate agents)
- **Current employees** and their networks

Step 2: Create Referral Incentive Programs

- **Customer referral rewards** (discounts, cash, gift cards)
- **Partner referral commissions**
- **Employee referral bonuses**

- **Tiered rewards** for multiple referrals

Step 3: Make Referrals Easy

- **Referral cards** customers can hand out
- **Online referral forms**
- **Social media sharing tools**
- **Email templates** for easy forwarding

Step 4: Follow Up and Thank

- **Immediate acknowledgment** of referrals
- **Regular updates** on referred prospects
- **Thank you gifts** for successful referrals
- **Public recognition** when appropriate

Referral Request Scripts:

For satisfied customers: "Mr. Johnson, I'm so glad you're happy with the work we did. Do you know anyone else who might benefit from the same quality service? I'd be happy to offer them the same attention to detail we provided for you."

For industry partners: "We're looking to work with more customers like the ones you refer to us. What would make it easier for you to recommend our services to your clients?"

Way #5: Leverage Technology and Automation

The Problem: Many trades businesses are still operating with paper-based systems, manual scheduling, and reactive customer service. This creates inefficiencies and limits growth potential.

The Solution: Implement technology solutions that streamline operations and improve customer experience.

Key Technology Areas:

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

- **Contact management** and history tracking
- **Automated follow-up sequences**
- **Quote and proposal generation**
- **Customer communication logs**

Scheduling and Dispatch

- **Digital scheduling systems**
- **GPS tracking and routing**
- **Real-time job updates**
- **Customer notification automation**

Financial Management

- **Digital invoicing and payment processing**
- **Expense tracking and categorization**
- **Cash flow forecasting**
- **Financial reporting automation**

Marketing Automation

- **Email marketing sequences**
- **Social media scheduling**
- **Review generation systems**
- **Lead nurturing campaigns**

Implementation Strategy:

1. **Start with one system** and master it completely
2. **Train your team thoroughly** before adding new tools
3. **Integrate systems** where possible to avoid data silos

4. **Measure ROI** on technology investments

Way #6: Develop Your Team and Leadership

The Problem: Most trades business owners become the bottleneck in their own companies. Everything depends on them, which limits growth and creates burnout.

The Solution: Build systems and develop people so your business can operate and grow without your constant involvement.

Leadership Development Framework:

Step 1: Document Everything

- **Standard operating procedures** for all key processes
- **Quality standards** and checklists
- **Safety protocols** and training materials
- **Customer service standards**

Step 2: Hire for Attitude, Train for Skill

- **Define your company culture** and values
- **Hire people who fit** your culture
- **Provide comprehensive training** programs
- **Create clear advancement paths**

Step 3: Implement Accountability Systems

- **Clear job descriptions** and expectations
- **Regular performance reviews**
- **Key performance indicators** for each role
- **Recognition and reward systems**

Step 4: Develop Future Leaders

- **Identify high-potential employees**
- **Provide leadership training** opportunities
- **Delegate increasing responsibility**
- **Create succession planning**

Team Development Tips:

- **Invest in ongoing training** and education
 - **Create a positive work environment**
 - **Communicate regularly** and transparently
 - **Celebrate successes** and learn from failures
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Implementation Roadmap

Month 1: Foundation Building

- Set up number tracking systems
- Document current sales process
- Analyze current pricing strategy
- Identify top referral sources

Month 2: System Implementation

- Implement sales process improvements
- Adjust pricing based on value analysis
- Launch referral incentive program
- Begin technology evaluation

Month 3: Optimization and Growth

- Refine systems based on initial results

- Implement chosen technology solutions
- Begin team development initiatives
- Plan for scaling and expansion

Ongoing: Continuous Improvement

- Regular review of all systems and metrics
 - Continuous training and development
 - Stay current with industry trends and technology
 - Seek coaching and mentoring for continued growth
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Conclusion

Growing a trades or service business requires more than just being good at your craft. It requires treating your business like a business – with systems, processes, and strategic thinking.

The six strategies outlined in this guide have been proven effective across hundreds of businesses in various trades and service industries. The key is not to try to implement everything at once, but to focus on one area at a time and build momentum.

Remember: **Consistency beats perfection every time.** Start with the area that will have the biggest impact on your business right now, implement it thoroughly, then move to the next strategy.

Your business has the potential to provide you with the income, freedom, and lifestyle you originally envisioned when you started. These six strategies will help you get there.

About Steven Rouget

Steven Rouget is an ActionCOACH Business Coach with 23 years of experience helping trades and service business owners build profitable, scalable companies. He specializes in working with businesses that want to grow beyond the owner's personal capacity and create systems that work.

Steven's approach combines practical, field-tested strategies with accountability and support to ensure implementation and results. His clients typically see significant improvements in profitability, efficiency, and work-life balance within the first 90 days of coaching.

Ready to implement these strategies in your business?

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Book a Free Business Growth Consultation: Visit stevenrouget.com.au to schedule your complimentary consultation and discover how these strategies can be customized for your specific business situation.

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