

Window Cleaners

Marketing

Blueprint

A Step by Step Guide



Window Cleaners

Marketing Blueprint

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Version 1.2

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INTRO

Welcome to *Marketing Your Window Cleaning Business*. In this book, I give a detailed overview of the marketing methods I used to generate millions of dollars a year. I explain how I did it with my window cleaning business and how you can do it better.

What follows is a step-by-step guide to creating and improving the marketing of your service. I will cover a wide variety of marketing methods and techniques that I used with success in my own business. Consider it a blueprint to filling your schedule with more jobs than you can handle. Marketing is the lifeblood of your company. When done right, it will fill your pipeline with an abundance of high-dollar work.

This book is for anyone in the window cleaning business looking to make more money in less time. It doesn't matter if you have a new company or an old company, a small company or a big company. Heck, maybe you don't even have a company yet, and you're just thinking about starting one up. Either way, you are in the right place.

Background

I started my window cleaning business, All County Window Cleaning, in September 1999. I grew it until 2013, when I sold the company and had a successful exit. At its peak, there were fifteen trucks on the road and over fifty window cleaners working in the field.

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In our first five years in business, these were our sales numbers:

1999: \$20,000—Me working part time and alone

2000: \$150,000—Me working part time with a helper

2001: \$425,000—Me deciding to hire people and build the company out full time; still operating from my dad's basement

2002: \$750,000—Me moving into the office full time and using all labor to complete the jobs

2003: \$1,000,000—Me in the office with a sales team and operations manager; five crews on the road

The numbers continued to climb until I sold and exited in 2013. The key to the success and rapid growth of the company was marketing. I learned early on that our marketing efforts directly affected our bottom line, and I focused on it.

The company still runs today and still uses the marketing plan I

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implemented years ago. In this book, I share all the techniques I used to market and grow the business. To me, marketing has always been the act of creating actions designed to generate interest in my service—nothing more, nothing less. I like to make the phone ring.

June 1999: I started my career as a professional window cleaner. A local company hired me to assist one of their long-term employees. We cleaned homes but mostly storefronts.

July 1999: Just one month later, the company owner delivered news of my termination. The cause was “working too slow.” I didn’t feel as if I’d been working too slow, but time is money, especially in route work. This was disheartening news because I enjoyed this job quite a bit. It was great working outside, and it allowed me to see some amazing homes and properties.

For the next couple of months, I bounced around and did a few handyman-type jobs, small renovations, and light construction. I enjoyed it but not as much as window cleaning. My thoughts drifted back to window cleaning, so I decided to give it a try on my own.

October 1999: I opened the word-processing program on my family’s Gateway PC. It was awful, but it worked. It allowed me to dial in to the Internet and waste hours of time. But on October 2 when I dialed in, I did something useful with it for the first time: I created my first marketing piece.

The program included clip art of leaves. Because it was fall, I figured I would make a fall-themed ad. It read like this:

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Window cleaning \$5 per window

Inside and out

Screens included

Free gutter cleaning with
any job

I put some nicely colored leaves across the bottom and gave it a read. The print was in black and white, so the color didn't matter too much.



Window Cleaning \$5 Per Window

Inside and out

Screens Included

Free gutter cleaning with any job!

All County Window Cleaning

Call NOW - 862-266-0677



The only thing missing was a company name and a way to contact me. I had my own phone line at the time because I was sharing a mother-daughter house with my dad. Although I had no real need for my own phone line, I had to have one because I was in a different part of the house. Cell phones were not common yet.

So, I added my phone number to the flyer and thought, “Hmm, a company name.” I did have one, and I certainly wasn’t a real business, so I gave it a thought and typed in the first thing that came to mind: All County Window Cleaning.

It was a rather unoriginal choice, as I knew of two businesses

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across town that used similar names. One was a septic company, and another was a heating-and-air-conditioning place. But it was the first thing that came to mind. I figured if I ever made it to the phone book, at least I would maybe get listed first. In hindsight, I never intended to make it into the phone book. I was only looking for a way to make some quick cash before the winter.

Back to my flyer. I had it all made up. I had my offer, my phone number, and my newly thought-of, plagiarized, and unregistered business name. I was all set! I printed off one hundred flyers and ran out to my truck to deliver them. I guess the whole process took maybe three hours from creation to print to delivery.

We lived in a lower-income part of town, but newly built McMansions were popping up all over the place. I figured that's where I wanted to go, and so I was on my way. I headed about five minutes up the road to a development called Glen Harbor. Sounds swanky, right?

I guess it was for the time, although it doesn't look so hot to me today.

I got there and then proceeded to drive illegally down the reverse side of the road and dump all one hundred flyers into the mailboxes of the McMansion owners. (Don't do this.)

The whole thing took maybe ninety minutes. I got home, walked in, and saw my answering machine was blinking. A light went off in my head. "Surely, that couldn't have worked so fast," I thought. But it had. The message was from a nice lady named Karen.

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She said she would like to get a quote on her windows. I thought it odd that she wanted a quote when my flyer stated that I would be charging five bucks a window. But I called her up. We chatted for a minute, and I got out of her that she had twenty-three windows. I told her it would be \$115. “That’s all?” she asked. “That’s all,” I said. “And you get a free gutter cleaning.”

You have to understand this was a ton of money to me. I grew up broke and had been able to make only about \$100 per day up until that point. I could make this \$100 in two to three hours.

When I went out to do Karen’s job and counted the windows, she, of course, had more than twenty-three—she had twenty-seven total and a sketchy skylight. I wanted \$10 for that in-and-out because her roof was as steep as hell, and I was scared to do it.

Her ticket jumped from \$115 to \$145. It was cool, though. She was thrilled with the work, and I had fun doing it.

As I did the job, and even more so toward the end, the gears in my head were turning: “My God, you can make a lot of money doing this.” And it was so simple to get the job. You put out flyers, you get work. Flyers equal cash and freedom from working for the man.

Marketing my window cleaning business always came easily to me. From day one, I saw the direct relationship between putting out an offer, completing the job, and getting paid.

Over the years, this has never changed. I had the same mind-set for all the thirteen years I spent running All County Window

Cleaning. You put out an offer, you get the work, you get paid. It's as simple as that, and it always has been.

Disclaimer

The ideas and concepts in this book are not original to me. I read a lot, up to fifty books per year. Most of what you will read here consists of things I have learned over the years. I have assembled all the best ideas into one marketing plan. Contained here are the best ideas from the books I have read.

There is almost no theory in this book. Most everything discussed in detail consists of actual techniques I have used. These include ideas and thoughts that I implemented in my own window cleaning business. I do touch on a handful of things I do not have much practical knowledge of, such as recent trends and methods that have popped up in the years since I exited.

Please also note: This book is primarily about marketing a business-to-consumer, residential-focused business.

NOT included in this book is marketing a business-to-business company. Think storefront, commercial, and high-rise window cleaning. They are a completely different animal, which I will not be covering.

Even More Disclaimers

This book should not be considered legal or financial advice. Do your due diligence and research to determine what is right for

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your business. The publisher is in no way shape or form recommending you spend any amount of money on the methods discussed. The publisher of this book is not liable for any damages or losses associated with the content in this book.

Downloads/Tools

The book comes with fifty free templates and downloads that coincide with each chapter. The templates are all created with Google Sheets and Photoshop. These templates are designed to give you a jumping-off point. They should help you sit down and start working on your business right away.

Google Sheets are your new best friend. Google Sheets are the ultimate tool to research, store, and plan your ideas. Aside from them being free, you can access these from any location or device. Did I mention these are free?

Book downloads and templates are all accessible through Google's free cloud service "Drive." You likely already have a Google account. But just in case you don't, you can get one here.

Snag your free Google account here:

<https://accounts.google.com/SignUp>

You can access Google Drive here:

<https://www.google.com/drive>

You can access Google Sheets here:

<https://www.google.com/sheets>

You can access Google Docs here:

<https://www.google.com/docs>

To make your life easier, store the files we discuss on Drive. Look for this symbol in each chapter where a download is available:



Please note:

The downloads have been purposefully set up to have an inconsistent look and feel. I did this intentionally to ensure the whole “Sparta Window Cleaning” brand is not duplicated across the country.

How to Use This Book

After you read chapter 3, feel free to skip around. There is no need to read in a linear fashion. Study what interests you the most. Think of it as an instruction manual or a how-to guide. Use the downloads! Most concepts covered have a corresponding downloadable document. You can use the exact templates I used in my window cleaning business.

Define Your Goals

Before you start, you should at least set your goals. Where do

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you want your business to go? Do you want to build a megahuge company? Or do you wish to work by yourself with a couple of guys and just command more money for your services? Either is possible. Use the goal template provided to document what you want to accomplish.



Sheet - Define Goals Template

The Difference

Before we start, I want to point out the difference between marketing and advertising. Most people would lump marketing and advertising together. It's important to note the differences, though.

Advertising is actually a subset or a type of marketing. It is just one small part of your overall marketing strategy.

Marketing is extensive. It includes but is not limited to your pricing, customer service strategy, offers, branding, specials, and promos.

Marketing is everything.

CHAPTER 1: MARKET RESEARCH

Demographic Data

Now let's talk about the demographics of your market.

Definition: *Market research* is any organized effort to gather information about target markets or customers.

You can do a few different types of market research. My recommendation is first to start a market demographic study.

This is an easy way to determine some critical information about your market. It will help you establish where your actual service area should be and help you decide exactly where to spend your marketing dollars.

We will select the service areas most likely to be open to your marketing efforts and uncover the potential customers with the most disposable income. Then we will help you uncover the sweetest spots within your area to target and focus your efforts.

The easiest way for me to explain how this works is to do an actual assessment of my service area. Start by accessing the “Market Research Template” from the download source. Make a copy of that, and pull it into your drive. Please note you will see three tabs in there. One contains my test account data, the other has some helpful links, and the third is just for you, in the form of a fresh template to start your market research:



Sheet - Market Research Template

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Why Do Market Research?

- To show or prove the financial viability for your service in a particular area.
- To assist in creating your official service zone and to determine how far you are willing to travel.
- To determine a list of areas within your service area of customers who are most likely to take advantage of your services—in other words, “Sweet Spots.”

I'm going to take you on a walk-through of a market analysis of my local area. If you follow through it with me using your data, when we are all finished, you will have a nice analysis of your market. With this information, you will be able to identify the absolute best places to focus your marketing efforts. We will match you up with the people and prospective customers who are the most likely to use your service.

Your marketing budget is only so big, and every dollar counts. By using this template and doing the exercises with me, you will be able to laser focus on all the prime locations. The obvious first choice for your research is the Internet. Let's get started!

Determine Your Service Area

Step 1) Access the “Market Research Template” download that comes with this book. Import a copy of that into your Google Drive, and we can get started. Please note the color coding in the top tabs of the spreadsheet. You can access the data in each

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column for your own service area from the following websites:

- factfinder.census.gov
- trends.findthehome.com
- melissadata.com/lookups/zipdistance.asp

Step 2) Go to freemaptools.com and navigate to the fifth option on the left. It is titled “Find Zip Codes Inside a Radius.”

Step 3) Enter the miles you are willing to travel from the zip code in which your office is located.

Tip: For this exercise, enter a distance that is a little farther than you would usually travel. You never know if there is a great zip code right outside your usual territory. Maybe it would be worth going there for a little higher of a fee? At this point, we are just researching, so it doesn’t matter if you overestimate.

This is a cool tool that’s handy for this and other research applications. It shows you the radius of the area you are willing to travel within. It also spits out the data we will need for our market research report.

As you can see, I am willing to travel twenty miles from our home base, and my zip code is 07461. Entering those two items yields me a list of all the zip codes within my radius, as well as the state and town name.

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Options

Show Centre Marker? Show US County Borders?

[Reset Map](#) [Full Screen](#)

Step 1 : Radius 32.19 km (maximum = 1000km) **OR** 20 miles (maximum = 625 miles)

Step 2 : Click on map **OR** Place by location name or ZIP code : 07461

Please Note : 3 or 4 digit ZIPS should be padded with zero's to produce a 5 digit number for the most accurate results. So 544 should be input as 00504.

[Draw Radius](#)

[CSV Output](#)

[Toggle CSV or New line](#)

ZIP Codes

Done (57 found)

07416
07418
07419
07421

States

NJ,NY,PA

Cities

FRANKLIN
GLENWOOD
HAMBURG
HEWITT

Combined

ZIP,State,County,City,TimeZone,Distance(km)

07416,NJ,SUSSEX,FRANKLIN,5.15
07418,NJ,SUSSEX,GLENWOOD,5.9
07419,NJ,SUSSEX,HAMBURG,5.11
07421,NJ,PASSAIC,HEWITT,5.23

Instructions

Step 4) Grab the highlighted data. Copy all the text, and paste it into the provided template. It should look something like this once it is in:

	B	C	D	E
1	Zip	State	County	Town Name
2				
3	18336	PA	PIKE	MATAMORAS
4	12771	NY	ORANGE	PORT JERVIS
5	12746	NY	ORANGE	HUGUENOT
6	10998	NY	ORANGE	WESTTOWN
7	10990	NY	ORANGE	WARWICK
8	10988	NY	ORANGE	UNIONVILLE
9	10987	NY	ORANGE	TUXEDO PARK
10	10981	NY	ORANGE	SUGAR LOAF
11	10979	NY	ORANGE	STERLING FOREST
12	10975	NY	ORANGE	SOUTHFIELDS
13	10974	NY	ROCKLAND	SLOATSBURG
14	10973	NY	ORANGE	SLATE HILL

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Please note I use a fancy splitting formula to cut out the un-needed data from the import. If you would like to use my formula for your data, just “unhide” the columns containing the formula on the far left.

Step 5) Examine the initial three columns of data you imported. Does everything look complete? Are there any towns you can think of that are missing? It never hurts to double check your work.

These five steps will help you determine your potential service area.

In the next section, we will research and enter relevant demographic information. This will help determine the possible customers in your new service zone.

Plug In the Demographic Data

Step 6) Navigate to the second website we will use in this process. Go to factfinder.census.gov. Enter the first zip code you have listed in your spreadsheet. It will then take you to a page that looks like this:

The screenshot shows a search interface for 'Community Facts'. A search bar at the top has '07871' entered. Below it, a sidebar menu lists categories: Population, Age, Business and Industry, Education, Governments, Housing, Income, Origins and Language, Poverty, Race and Hispanic Origin, Veterans, and Show All. The main content area displays 'Population' data for 'Census 2010 Total Population' with the value '21,165'. A link 'Source: 2010 Demographic Profile' is shown below. At the bottom, there's a section titled 'Popular tables for this geography:' listing '2010 Census' (General Population and Housing Characteristics, Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin, Households and Families), '2014 American Community Survey' (Demographic and Housing Estimates, Annual Population Estimates), '2014 Population Estimates Program' (Annual Population Estimates), 'Census 2000' (General Demographic Characteristics), and a note about 'Want more? Need help? Use Guided Search or visit Census.gov's Quick Facts.'

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From here, you will be able to uncover all sorts of wonderful information. You will know all about your service area and the potential customers within it.

At the least, I would like to see you enter each zip code into the website and log the following data points:

- Population count
- Median income
- Total homes in each zip code
- Number of homes occupied by renters
- Number of homes occupied by owners
- Median age
- Level of education high school and beyond
- Poverty level
- Percentage of population who are female

With these nine points of data tracked against your zip code, you will have powerful data at your fingertips.

But let's not stop there. We are so close to making it just a little bit better.

Step 7) Navigate to melissadata.com/lookups/zipdistance.asp

From here, you can plot how far each of your prospective zip codes is from your home base. I know this seems like a small thing, but trust me, do it. The data will come in handy in the future. Go to your spreadsheet, and plot every single data point in every town we listed.

Step 8) Navigate to trends.findthehome.com.

At this site, we are researching and logging the average sale price of a home in your service area.

If you find any missing data, other free websites will provide similar data for you. Google around a bit; you'll find it.

Analyze and Review the Data

Researching and logging all the information in your service area will take almost a full day. I promise you it will all be worth it. You will be so much closer to making better-informed decisions in your business. Now for the fun part: analyzing and reviewing, slicing and dicing the data, cutting up the spreadsheet, and sorting through the columns. We will go over some different factors here and try to determine why each of them is important.

Let's focus on this area first:

Median income—The higher, the better. Sort your spreadsheet from highest to lowest median income. Highlight with a color of your choice the top-twenty towns that have the highest median income.

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Total homes in each zip code—Although this won't be a deciding factor for you, it will be helpful later on.

Number of homes occupied by renters—The lower the number, the better. Renters are going to be much less likely to use your services.

Number of homes occupied by owners—The higher, the better.

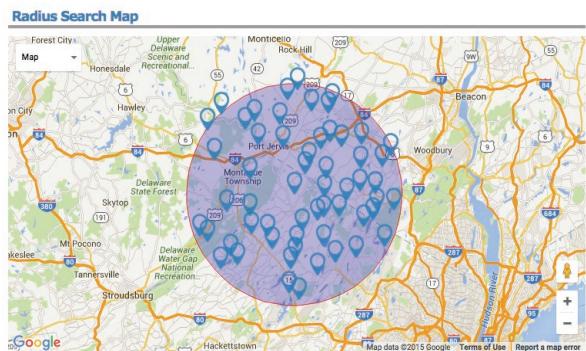
Median age—This is an interesting one. My research has shown that women between the ages of forty and fifty-five are my most likely customers.

Level of education high school and beyond—The higher, the better. More education typically equals more disposable income.

Poverty level—The lower, the better. Avoid areas with a high poverty level.

Percent of population who are female—This one doesn't matter too much. It will always end up being around 50%.

Sort each column from highest to lowest. Highlight the top-twenty highest or lowest cells based on the factors above. Step back and take a look at the data. It should be no problem for you to decide what areas will be the most responsive to your services.



Here is where I would most likely target (in my area)

Other things to consider are distance in miles from your location and average home-sale price. What appears to be an amazing town might not end up being so amazing when you see how far it is from your home base. Average home-sale price is interesting because it may help you gauge the size of the houses. Larger homes usually will equate to a higher window count. The more windows on-site, the higher your average ticket price can rise.

Don't base your decision on any one of these factors alone. Use all the data together to make an educated determination. We want to put your marketing efforts in front of the people most likely to take advantage of your services.

Competitor Research

The other part of your market research is seeing what your competitors are up to.

If I had only twenty hours for market research a year, I would spend sixteen hours researching the ideal customer and the local town demographics and spend the other four hours doing a competitor analysis.

Don't discount the power of knowing what your competition is up to. After all, you can't be better than them if you don't know what they are like. Competitor research is part of knowing your market. We don't want you to become obsessed about this, but we do want you to have some general knowledge about them. Here are some things you should know about the companies you are up against:

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Background:

- Company name
- Owner's name
- Phone number
- Website
- Location
- Operations
- Service radius
- Employee count
- Vehicle count
- What is their core business?
- Window cleaning
- Pressure washing
- Landscaping, etc.
- Big contracts held?
- Big contracts end date

- Marketing—What methods are they using against you?
- Direct mail
- Social media
- Paid print advertising
- Web presence
- How do they rank against your targeted key words?
- How are their reviews and ratings?
- Social media:

Social media can be a great place for you to keep an eye on the competition. You don't need to stalk them, but it couldn't hurt to keep your eye out for what they are up to. How active are they? Are they doing anything worth emulating? What kind of promotions and specials are they running? What's the word on the street?

Again, I don't want you to obsess about this, and it's something you should check on only a couple of times a year.

Don't have an adversarial relationship with them. In fact, you should try to befriend them all. Have conversations with them, and even try to get together now and then. Likely, most of them will not have similar goals as you, and they can turn into great sources of referral work. We got tons of work from friendly competitors.

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Do know that your strong marketing campaign will help your competition grow. You're marketing creates competition. I knew that our marketing efforts kept whole competitor companies of ours in business. I did a ton of marketing. On some days, it caused hundreds of people to call us for services. If we couldn't get to them fast enough, or if they thought our price was way high, they could call one of our competitors.

These were people who never knew they wanted their windows cleaned until I spent the time and money to market to them. It always irked me on some level that my hard marketing work kept some of our competitors in business. But at the end of the day, I was just happy to have plenty of work.

Also, whether you believe it or not, there is enough glass out there for everyone to clean. There is way more glass than all the window cleaning companies in the world can handle. Your competition isn't your real competitor. The real competitor is you and the customers who don't know they want their windows cleaned.



Sheet - Competitor Analysis Spreadsheet

Psychographics

The demographic research into your service area was our first step. Then we looked at whom we are up against in that market with our competitor research. Now we are going to look into the psychographics of our potential customers within the market.

The demographics we looked at will help you understand *who*

1 • Market Research

will use your service. Psychographics help you understand *why* they will use your service.

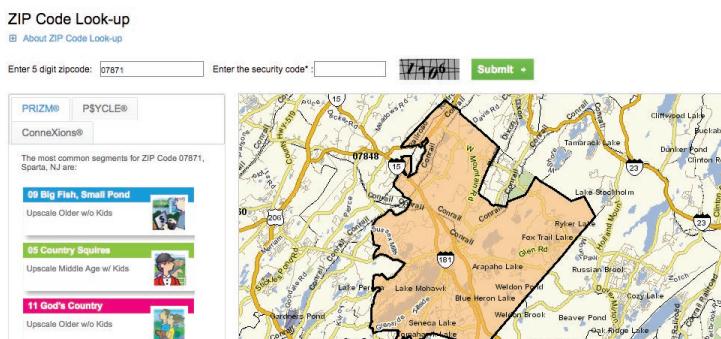
Here are some examples of psychographic factors:

- Concerns—What worries them?
- Lifestyle—Do they live beyond their means, or are they savers? How do they spend their leisure time? What are their hobbies? What brings fulfillment to them?
- Values—What are they?

You can figure this stuff out from surveys, informal conversations, and data mining.

Check this out: segmentationsolutions.nielsen.com/mybestsegments

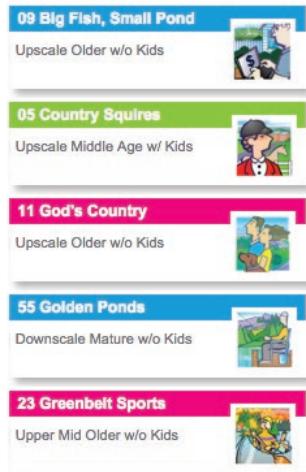
It is a very interesting website. Enter a zip code, and then it will give you psychographic profiles of your potential customers. A gold mine of information is here for you. It contains everything you need to see regarding whom you are marketing to and what their interests are. You enter the zip code, and it spits this out:



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Look to the left. It pigeon-holes the people in that zip code into predefined segments.

The most common segments for ZIP Code 07871, Sparta, NJ are:



Then, if I click into 09 Big Fish, Small Pond, it tells me about the psychographics behind this segment. Here is what it says:

Upscale Older w/o Kids—Older, upper-class, college-educated professionals, the members of Big Fish, Small Pond are often among the leading citizens of their small-town communities. These upscale, empty-nesting couples enjoy the trappings of success, including belonging to country clubs, maintaining large investment portfolios, and spending freely on computer technology.

Golden information! Totally priceless. With this data, I can get a real insight into the people within a particular zip code. With a little analysis, I can determine everything I need to know about my target market.

What's even cooler is that once I find a segment that's responsive to my marketing or is just a good fit for a customer, I can track them down in other zip codes in my area with ease.

On the Nielsen website, click “Segment Explorer.” Look at all the different segmentations they have created. Give it a review;

your ideal customer is in there somewhere. The more you know about them and what they are into, the better you can match and market your services to them. This will save you tons of money. It helps prevent you from marketing to the wrong type of person or area.

Psychographics isn't as painless to categorize as demographics. It's not as cut and dried. But once you combine the two types of data, you have a powerful combination on your hands. You'll know where your ideal customer is and also what makes them tick. This includes how they will respond and what finally motivates them to schedule your services.

Customer Avatars

The next and final step with this process is to create a customer avatar—four of them, actually. It sounds silly, but don't skip this; it's important. A customer avatar is your most ideal customer and an overview of what likely makes them tick. It combines demographics and psychographics in one place.

Meet Bob Smith. He is a fictional character I created who best represents one of my four main customer types.

Heres my avatar for Bob:

Nielsen segment name: 01–
Upper Crust



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Name: Bob Smith

Age: Sixty-eight

Occupation: Retired executive

Lives in: Sparta, New Jersey

Income: \$150K a year from savings

Married: Yes

Children: Two; older, live in the area

Hobbies: Golf

Motivations: Relaxation and hanging out with the grandkids

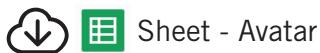
Goals: Get better at golf

Fears and frustrations: War, terrorism, and the stock market

Objections to using our service: Wants to be sure he's getting a good value

The best place to advertise: Newspaper insert

Review the Nielsen data, and determine your four most common types of customers. Categorize them in the client avatar spreadsheet download:



1 • Market Research

Give them each a name, and fill in the data about them. Get the data based on the methods I mentioned above. Also, blend in your intuition and past experiences. What type of customers have you worked for in the past? Which ones were the most desirable to work with? Which types would you like to do more work for in the future?

Having four customer avatars, in the beginning, is important. Likely, after you get rolling, you will choose to reduce to two.

Having a customer avatar will help you decide the following:

- What type of advertisements are they most receptive to?
- Where should you be marketing to maximize the exposure to them?
- What type of story should your marketing be telling and with what type of language to use?

A customer avatar will help you track down your most ideal customers. You will gain a better understanding of how they operate. The more you know about them, the better you can speak to them. That will help increase the effectiveness of all your marketing activities.

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CHAPTER 2: BEST PRACTICES

This chapter contains what I consider best practices. Stay true to these principles, and you will increase your business's chance of success.

Keep these in mind, and use them as a rule of thumb. If you do, all the techniques and methods we talk about will come together much better. Following them will make your life a lot easier and your business a lot more enjoyable, maybe even fun. :)

Your Database

I don't care what you use. Use anything, just use it consistently. Good customer relationship management (CRM) software will help you keep track of all prospective and actual clients. It should be able to store all the important information you need on a client: name, address, contact details. It should also have a calendar and scheduling function built in. When you're first getting started, you can get away with something free and bare bones just to get going. But as you start to get larger *or* if you plan to be large, you are going to need a more robust software solution. It should be able to tell you which of the three following categories everyone in your database is currently in:

Active customer—Has a job scheduled at some point in the future

Prospective—Has called in for an estimate but never booked an appointment

Inactive—Has had an appointment in the past but has nothing on the schedule now

A good CRM will also be able to help you with your marketing activities. It should store and report information that you enter. Some examples of key information you want to collect are the following:

Contact details—Name, address, phone number, and e-mail

Job site overview—Appointment times, window counts, technicians on-site

Job site details—Customer preferences, likes, and dislikes

Source—How did this customer find you? What marketing method finally spurred them to contact you?

Remarketing—What got that existing customer in your database to call you again to book another job?

A customer may have originally gotten into your system by seeing a newspaper ad. But they may have come back for a second appointment months later after they received a postcard. It's key that you differentiate between these two things. Ask, "Was it the newspaper ad or the postcard that caused you to call us back again?"

Make it a habit to keep detailed pricing records. How many windows do they have, what type are they, and what did you or would you charge for them? Also, keep track of who was on-site, who did the estimate, and how long the job took—specifically,

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how many man-hours Go the extra mile and keep track of pricing details for services you haven't performed—things that the customer didn't even ask about.

We always made it a point to keep track of pricing for a variety of services. For example, if we were there just to clean the windows, we would also take note of what it would cost to clean their roof and wash their house and deck. Even notes and details on cleaning their gutters inside and out were worth recording.

All this data would get stored in our computer system. It allowed us to market other services to them in the future. We could give them quotes on what it would cost because we already had the data in our system.

Tip: Keep track of their dog's name. It's always impressive when you show up a year later and remember Fido.

Elevator Pitch

You should work up a thirty- to sixty-second pitch offer or summary of what your company does and how it can help the consumer. The concept is you should be able to explain your product or service in a quick elevator ride. Have one for your business, rehearse it, and be able to spit it out whenever the chance arises.

Here's one I used for many years:

All County Window Cleaning is New Jersey and New York's premier residential window cleaning company. We offer a full array of home exterior services designed to enhance your property's

appearance and curb appeal. Our services save you time and money. Appointments are available six days a week. How soon can I get you on the schedule?

It sounds stupid and hokey, but I encourage you to have one in your head. You never know where you'll be or whom you'll bump into. If you're out marketing your company every day, this is a must-have. It will assist not only your marketing efforts but also your entire sales process.

Test, Test, Test

Test everything. Test, tweak, and retest. Always. Start small with everything, and gauge the results. Make small changes, and re-test. Get in the habit of doing this often. It will save you tons of money in the long run. If you're going to market, it makes sense that you do it in the most cost-effective efficient manner.

Bullets and then Cannonballs

One of my favorite books is *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't* by Jim Collins. It talks about the theory of firing bullets and then cannon balls. I recommend you read this book at some point. But to give you a quick overview, the concept goes like this:

Start small and test new ideas. When you launch a campaign with a completely new idea, concept, or pricing structure, start small. Fire bullets. They are tiny, fast, low cost, and low risk.

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Once you have proven your ideas to be effective, then consider firing cannonballs. They are bigger, heavier, and more forceful. Bullets won't sink a ship, but cannonballs can. Test your marketing efforts over and over again.

Test, tweak, rinse, and repeat on a small-scale basis. If your tests prove profitable, consider firing a cannonball. Here is a real-life example:

I would always print postcards in groups of one thousand. I would send out five tests over a set period, using the same postcard but with small changes: different headlines, fonts, and offers. The card that produced the best results was printed in mass quantities. We started small with bullets, tested, tweaked, and then fired our cannonballs. My cannonballs looked like twenty-five thousand pieces of direct mail. Yours can be whatever number, as long as you start small.

Remember, bullets first and then cannonballs.



Supply-and-Demand Scheduling

Supply-and-demand pricing is a theory I instilled in our sales process just a few years before I sold the company. Oh, the money I would have made and saved if I had only thought about it earlier.

It works like this: The phone rings in May (busy season). “Hi, this is Miss Smith. I need my windows cleaned.” OK, blah blah blah blah sales pitch. Here’s your price. Now, how soon can we get you on the schedule? “Oh, that’s way too much. I can’t afford that.” OK, what can you afford?

Well, I’ll tell you what, Miss Smith. We can do that for \$100 off our normal price, *but* we won’t be able to get to you until August 21. Would you prefer the morning or the afternoon that day?

This is a win-win. The customer gets the price they want. You get a day filled with work in the middle of the summer, when you’re destined to be slow anyway. Many business owners will say you shouldn’t waiver because your price is your price. Well, when you have employees whom you need to keep busy, you’re in a different mind-set. I pretty much went into it knowing that I would do just a little better than break even in August and some of September. But it was all worth it because I had all my key employees on hand for the rapidly approaching busy season.

The Importance of Good Design

In the intro, I showed you my first marketing piece. I rolled with handmade designs like this for a couple of years, after which we

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moved to a more professional design.

Something like this, for example:



PSD - Sparta Window 5 Around Postcard

You can download this if you want to use it.

Our response rate instantly doubled. Yes, it doubled.

If you can't make it look great, bring someone in to help you. It's no longer expensive to look good. There is no excuse not to have good design. The Window Cleaning Resource Association (WCRA), for example, provides hundreds of premade templates. They are professionally designed and guaranteed to get you results.

I am an advocate of hiring a professional for specialized tasks, design included. But with graphic design, I would encourage you to have some working knowledge. A general understanding

of how it works and how to edit basic files is beneficial to your business.

I'm not suggesting you gain the complete mastery of Photoshop, but it is helpful to be able to manipulate a file or two. Sometimes you need something done immediately. Sometimes you may have an idea you want to capture and sketch up.

Photoshop used to be superexpensive. These days, it's a little cheaper. You can subscribe to Adobe's cloud service for \$10 a month. You can also pick up a more scaled-down version called Photoshop Elements. It's available for around \$50 if you search around a bit. At that price, it makes sense to at least give it a try. Check out YouTube for ample instructional videos to get you up and running.

Antibranding?

Branding is a marketing strategy that involves creating a differentiated name and image, often using a logo and tagline to establish a presence in the consumer's mind, all based on attracting and keeping customers.

Everything should hang together. Your vehicles, uniform, paperwork, scripts, and advertising should have a consistent look and feel. They should also deliver a consistent message and philosophy.

Bigger, nationwide companies spend huge amounts of money every year on branding campaigns, efforts designed wholly to keep the brand top of mind with potential consumers. For big

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household names, this makes a lot of sense. But in a smaller service company, the funds aren't there for such a campaign.

The margins in our type of business are lean; every dollar counts. If you're going to spend money on marketing, it should not be about awareness or name recognition. It should be about action and movement. It should be about converting noncustomers to customers. It should be about getting prospective customers to take action and schedule a job with you.

Aside from the cost aspects of branding strategies, I just don't believe them to be necessary in a small, infrequent service business. In the best-case scenario, you are going to be servicing your customers once or twice a year at most. Yes, there will be customers who call for your services more often. But the fact of the matter is, you're not going to see a customer more than a couple of times per year. I know you don't want to hear this, but they don't care about you or your company. They just want their windows cleaned or their house washed. They don't want your brand in their face twenty-four seven.

I'm not antibranding, I just know the reality is you have a small amount of dollars to spend. And if you're going to spend them, it may as well be on activities that will help you make immediate money, not help you be remembered in the client's mind. You can remind them who you are and why they love you with a couple of simple postcard mailings to them per year.

Coupons

Always use them. They are a great call to action, and they im-

2 • Best Practices

ply a deal or special offer even if there isn't one. People like coupons, and they like to feel as if they're getting a good deal. Don't you?

You don't even need to discount your service to use them. They are effective even if you are using them only as a way to present your services.

Here is an example of me doing just that:



PSD - Coupon 3 Strip

There's something about those dashed lines that gets people's attention. — — — — — I love them. :)

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Call to Action

Everything you do and release should have a call to action. Think of your call to action as the final instruction to the reader of your marketing piece or website. They've read it over, and they are almost sold. All they need to do now is what you tell them to do.

What do you want them to do? I want people to call now; we do our best sales over the phone. You may prefer to have someone fill out a form or submit an e-mail.

Here are some of my favorite calls to action:

- 1) Call now for a FREE no-obligation quote—Best for direct mail
- 2) Get clean windows now—Best for websites
- 3) Instant attention

Currently, I'm using instant attention to prompt people to fill out my ResponsiBid. It's working!

Why #1 works so well:

You are instructing them what to do, and it's free; there is no risk.

There is no obligation with a phone call. They can hang up anytime. :)

You are removing the barriers and reservations someone might have. Everything you do should be chipping away at any po-

tential objection. Set yourself up for success by removing any hesitations your target client may have—before you even speak to them!

Get all the objections out of the way before you talk to them. Do that, and you'll see how we closed 90% of the people who called us.

Guaranteed to Improve Your Marketing

If you do the things listed below, I guarantee your marketing results will improve.

Hours and Days of Operation

The days and times you decide to keep your company open for business can have a big impact on your marketing, especially if you go into it with that in mind. Use your days and hours of operation as a marketing tool.

Example:

Open six days a week from sunup to sundown. Have convenient appointment times to fit the needs of your schedule.

Boom. This seems like a simple thing, but it's so powerful, especially when leveraged in conjunction with your other marketing activities. Think about it for a minute. If your target market is busy stay-at-home moms or professionals, their schedule is just as full as yours.

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Make it effortless for a prospective client to do business with you. If they see that you will work around their busy schedule, and then they notice that Bob's Window Cleaning doesn't have Saturday appointments, whom do you think they're going to call first?

Do you think they would be willing to pay more for a Saturday appointment? I know they will!

I'm not telling you to work crazy hours and spend all your weekends on the glass. But I am telling you that for many, many years, we offered appointments seven days a week. If the sun was shining, we were working. It was a huge competitive advantage for us.

There is also a segment of employees eager for weekend work. We were the clear choice in the customers' minds. We worked around them. We accommodated their schedules. We did what was best for them. And we made a killing and had huge market share because of it.

Accept Credit Cards

Don't hesitate. Your target customer base loves to use them. Your accepting them is key. The day we started using Visa and MasterCard logos, we saw an instant uptick in phone calls and sales.

I suggest putting the logos on all your marketing materials. If a potential customer gets your ad and they see they can use a credit card to pay, your chances of landing that job go up, espe-

cially if they are currently strapped or low on cash. Most people always are.

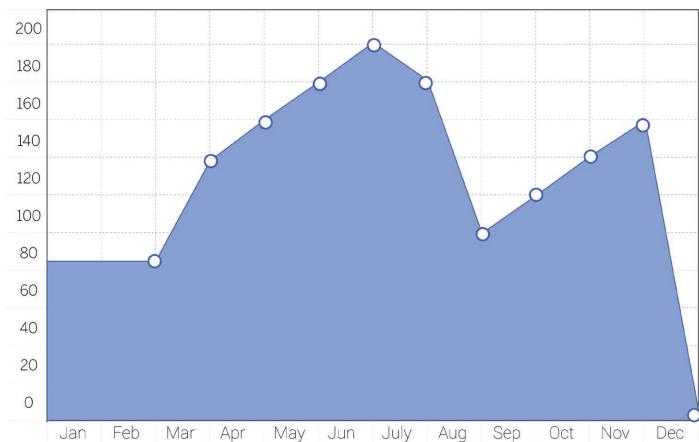
Accepting cards is superpainless these days. My personal favorite processor is Stripe. Square, PayPal, and QuickBooks are also good. Yes, you will lose 2.5% in processor fees, but it's a price worth paying.

Once you realize that you will get more sales because you accept them, it's all worth it, not to mention the increased cash flow you will see from being able to charge them right away. You will no longer place accounts-receivable calls or take checks to the bank!

Market More When You're Busy

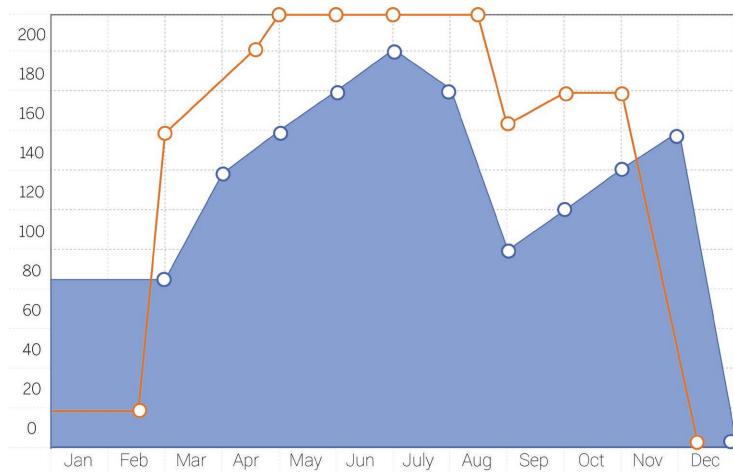
Market when you are busy, or you won't be busy for long.

This graph shows the average seasonality of my business overlaid by my marketing activities. It took me a few years of deadly slow summers to figure this out, and it changed everything when I did. Here in New Jersey, our seasonality looks something like this:



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This graph here, number two, shows the layover of marketing. Notice how I market more before I get slow.



Marketing should be an ongoing thing. For twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and fifty-two weeks a year, you should have things set up to be marketing your business. If you enjoy the slow periods and like taking time off when the business slows down, skip this chapter. But if you want to be busy all year round and make consistent money, keep reading. If you have full-time employees and intend on keeping them, keep reading. Steady workflow through most of the year is important. The whole key to staying busy during the lean times is to market more when you're busy.

Most people instinctively think to crank up the marketing once they get slow. But you should be cranking up the marketing long before it happens. That will help ensure you never actually get slow. You nip the problem in the bud before it occurs.

Trust Logos

The Better Business Bureau is a total scam. I know it, you know it, and everyone knows it. But the \$400 a year I paid them to use their logo more than paid for itself.

Other trust logos worth using include the following:

Angie's List, logos of associations, and review sites. You can even make your own—for example, 100% satisfaction guaranteed.

Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover logos are also considered trust logos. They work on a deep part of the human psyche. In reality, they are meaningless. But what it comes down to is that the human brain sees these logos and associates them with authority and trust. People trust these companies. When you use the logos, some of that trust rubs off on you. Your company is deemed more trustworthy by the simple act of using the logos.



It's simple to set up and put in place. Once you do, your response rates will increase. Finding print-ready trust logos can be tough, so feel free to use mine.



PSD - Trust Logos - CC BBB

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100% Satisfaction Guaranteed

One hundred percent satisfaction guaranteed; we will make it right, or you get your money back. I had this exact same guarantee in my window cleaning business for ten years. In that ten-year period, we completed over seventy-five thousand residential jobs. We ended up refunding just seven customers. A money-back guarantee sounds crazy. But when you add the condition “we will make it right,” it starts making a lot of sense.

It's not about the guarantee. It's about eliminating any possible objection the customer might have. It's about cutting down anything that could get in the way of a customer booking a job with you.

Rain Guarantee



Have one. It always rains, and it's always a fear. Much like the standard guarantee above, it's designed to put your customer's mind at ease. It also gives them one more reason to choose your company. It breaks down any possible objections before they arise. It also keeps you working when it's raining. This is, of course, a personal preference. I can count on two hands the number of times we have had to touch

up a customer with a rain guarantee. With over seventy-five thousand jobs under our belt, you can't argue with the statistics.



PSD - Rain Guarantee Seal Faction

Pricing—Theory—Presentation

- 1) Percentage off sucks.
- 2) Dollars off is real and tangible.

Keep these two things in mind across your marketing campaigns. Learn them and embrace them. The human brain has a hard time translating *percentage off* into something tangible. Look at these two offers:

- 1) Twenty-five percent off all services. A customer says, “OK, 25% off. What price? What does that mean? What will it cost me? How much do I save? Ugh, that’s confusing. I’m not sure I even want to call and find out.”
- 2) Twenty windows cleaned for \$199. This is insanely easy for the mind to understand. When a potential customer sees this offer, they know exactly what it’s going to cost them. They are much more likely to pick up the phone and call you if they know what the price is approximately going to be. It demystifies the whole process. Usually, their thought is, “Man, window cleaning sounds expensive.” But with a real, tangible offer like twenty windows cleaned for X dollars, the thought translates to, “Wow! That’s much more affordable than I ever would have thought. Let’s do this. I’m going to pick up the phone and call them right now.”

This is another one of those small, simple things. When you put it into practice, you will find that it actually works.

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Pricing—Theory—Command Your Price

I discovered early on that certain marketing methods attracted price shoppers, whereas others didn't.

After further thought, I broke down the idea to this:

If the customer wants to have their windows cleaned, and they reach out to you, they are likely a price shopper. If you reach out to the customer first through marketing, they likely will not be a price shopper.

When you plant the idea in the customer's mind, they are more likely to just call and book the appointment. You have a better chance of commanding a higher price for your service if you are the only choice in their mind. Set everything up so they wouldn't even think of calling someone else.

How to Price Like a Boss

We would always have a base price or promo we were running. It was usually something like "twenty windows cleaned for \$199." It worked because we knew the homes we were marketing to had an average of thirty-five windows.

So, they would call to get their twenty windows cleaned for about \$10 a pop, and then we would charge our normal price for windows above the coupon.

This is how an average ticket looked:

20 promo windows @ \$9.95 = \$199

15 regular windows @ \$23 = \$345

Total bill = \$544 + tax

As you can see, the real money made was on the windows above and beyond the coupon that got us in the door.

I discovered that anything after the twenty windows was our profitable spot. That additional price could fluctuate on a day-to-day basis, and it did!

We made the most profit on those extra windows over the original twenty. The twenty-window coupon got us in the door and covered our expenses. Windows number twenty-one and beyond made us the real money.

Pricing—Theory—Supply-and-Demand Pricing

Yep, I wish I would have caught on to this a little earlier in the game. But here it is for you. You know about the twenty-window special and the fixed price. At most, this would change maybe every month or quarter. The promo was the promo, and it stayed around for good chunks of time.

One of my key metrics was the closing ratio. At day's end, we would calculate the number of incoming calls compared with our number of customers scheduled. The key percentage I looked for was a 90% close rate.

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That's a really high closing rate in any business. But we were really good—and I mean really good. Our phone room ran like a Swiss watch. I'll save the full story for another book. But know that 90% was the number I was looking for.

I got to the point where if I saw we scheduled over 90% of the calls the previous day, I would raise window prices by a buck. If I saw the close rate dip after a few days, I would drop prices by a buck until it self-corrected back to 90%.



Sheet - Daily Sales Performance Report

The shock and horror on the sales reps' faces when I came in and raised prices day after day were indescribable. I raised the price per window from \$15 to \$16 to \$17 all the way up to \$29 for a double-hung window.

The sales reps were angry and petrified to present the customers with such a high price. They feared we would get yelled at and earn a bad reputation. They felt bad, and they thought the customers would be mad at them. All that fear went out the window once their first commission check came in at the higher window price.

We grandfathered-in past customers at a lower rate. Only the new customers were getting this increased pricing.

Charging as much as possible did take some time for everyone to come onboard. But once they did, everyone was better off for it. The company was making more money, and it trickled down. The sales team was making higher commissions than they had ever seen. The window cleaners in the field were raking it in as

well, some over \$2,000 a week during the busy season. Good for them! Job satisfaction was at an all-time high.

Don't you feel bad charging so much?

No, not for a second. We don't force anyone to use our service. We are here when you need us, and these are the prices we are going to charge today. If they are too high, maybe I can interest you in an August 15 appointment? Would you prefer morning or afternoon that day? :)

Take Lots of Pictures

Take lots of before-and-after pictures of your work, your vehicles, and your staff. One of my biggest regrets over the years has been not taking enough pictures on the job. It wasn't always easy; we took our first marketing pictures on disposable cameras.

Today, though, there's no excuse. With a modern smartphone, it's a no-brainer. You never know when pictures will come in handy. You can use them for future marketing campaigns or your website.

Before-and-after pictures are extremely powerful; make a habit of taking them. Also, if you have staff or a team, take lots of photos of them working and looking happy. I promise they will come in handy. Always get permission before taking or using them. Ask the customer first; they almost always will say yes. If you get a great picture, be sure to have the customer sign a photo-release form. Most won't have a problem with it. Here is a photo-release form you can download and print off:

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Doc - Realease Form

Clients versus Customers

A *client* is a customer whom you have an ongoing relationship with.

They use your services on a regular basis.

A *customer* is a person who has made a single purchase from you or who purchases infrequently. Think of Miss Johnson, who uses you every four years.

The goal is to have more clients than customers. Keep this in mind with everything you do—every transaction, every touch, every thought. You want to have an ongoing relationship with these people. It is far more cost effective to get a client to buy than it is to get a whole-new customer. For this to occur, you have to have a mind-set of relationship over the transaction. Value and show appreciation for the relationship, and it will continue and continue.

Be Easy

Be easy to do business with, and the sales will roll in. Let the customers schedule when they want to. Let them pay with whatever method they choose. Show an honest interest in them and the things they care about. Have a great demeanor on the phone and in person. Show passion and enthusiasm. Work quickly and

2 • Best Practices

have self-confidence and high energy. Show attention to detail and great respect for the customer. If you conduct yourself like this, everything else will fall into place.

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CHAPTER 3: WHERE TO START?

How much should I spend?

How much should you spend on marketing activities? There is no wrong or right answer here. Maybe the right answer is as little as possible while still achieving your goals. I have spent between 8% and 15% of my budget on marketing. I would try to cap it around 10% max, though. With that amount, I was able to stay in massive growth mode year after year and still sustain a healthy profit. Spend as little as possible while still achieving your goals.

Marketing Mix

Have a good one. Print, digital, and referral should all be part of your strategy. In this book, we cover 147 different marketing methods you can use in your business. They can all be pigeonholed into one of three categories: print, digital, or referral. It is extremely important that you don't attempt all these methods at once. It would lead to instant failure.

Experiment with maybe five of these methods at once. Make sure they span the three categories mentioned. This helps you hedge your bets and expand your opportunities. Basically, it makes it so you are not putting all your eggs in one basket. It opens you up to a wider segment of customers. You'll never be able to reach all your potential customers across one method.

Budgeting

You could spend millions of dollars on the stuff we have been talking about. But you don't need to. Do not overspend, and don't go over budget. Staying within the confines of your budget will keep you profitable, and it will help you be more creative.

Although you don't want to be cheap, continue to think about how you can get more accomplished for less. Where can you save? Here is a budget template to get you started. Get into this, and plug in your costs.



Sheet - Marketing Budget

One Full Marketing Day Per Month

According to Michael Masterson, author of *Ready, Fire, Aim: Zero to \$100 Million in No Time Flat*, a CEO founder should spend upward of 70% of their time on marketing and sales activities.

I believe that to be true, but you can't do that when you are just starting out, because you are wearing all the hats: window cleaner, bookkeeper, etc. But it is something to work toward. At the very least, set up one day a month to focus in. Dedicate ten straight uninterrupted hours where you study, analyze, and work on marketing activities.

Here is roughly how you should spend those ten hours a month:

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- 1) Review—How did the previous month go? Study your reports. What marketing tactics did you use this month, and what were the results? What was a hit, and what was a miss?
- 2) Analyze—Crunch the numbers, and tie all your revenue from the previous month to a marketing method. What were your conversion rates on each method?
- 3) Interpret—What do your reports tell you? What do you need to do more of, and what do you need to do less of?
- 4) Create—Do you need to create new things for the upcoming month or quarter? Or did things go so well last month that you're not going to change a thing?
- 5) Plan—Review your marketing calendar for the next month and quarter. What's coming up, and what things do you need to do and coordinate? What's the next action?

Download the free month-in-review template. It will help you evaluate your numbers and plan your next month's activities.



Sheet - Month In Marketing Review

Set aside one day per month to review your marketing, your ads, your reports, your marketing calendar, etc. Compare and benchmark to the previous period. The important thing here is that you do this. Great insights can come out of great focus. Spend the time on it, and make it a priority. Your business will thank you for it.

Marketing Calendar

You are much more likely to stick to and execute a marketing plan if it is calendarized. I recommend you create a yearly calendar, which will show what marketing methods you have done and are planning to do. This is simple. Go to Google Calendar, find the “My Calendar link and click “Create Marketing Calendar.” Enter some things you are planning to do in the next month.



Sheet - Marketing Calendar

The benefits of keeping and maintaining a marketing calendar are immense. Not only do you have a great ongoing, detailed record of your past marketing efforts, but also it enables you to plan future marketing campaigns strategically. You get to see a big picture overview of what you want to accomplish, and it allows you to plan the tiny details of a prospective campaign.

The fact of the matter is, if it's written down and planned, you are much more likely to make it happen. Plans in your head are nothing more than passing thoughts. But when you put a thought down on paper and make a plan of it, it becomes more real.

Consider with your marketing calendar “Seasonal Marketing” structuring everything around a season. This approach clicks with people.

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Sense of Urgency

Create a sense of urgency in all your marketing efforts. Everything should have an expiration date, and people should always schedule now to save. Always!

Marketing Automation

If it repeats, automate it. Once you are on to a winning method, you will want to systemize it. Preplan repetitive tasks to ensure they execute without a hiccup.

Where Not to Market

These are areas that you should skip. Where not to market is just as important as where to market. You have a limited marketing budget, and every dollar counts. I'm not saying these methods listed below won't work for you, but I am saying they didn't work for me. Below are some of my past failures and a couple of reasons to justify my thought process.

- 1) Anywhere at a golf course. People don't care and aren't in the mind-set of buying when they are out having fun.
- 2) Money Mailer or Valpak. I watch my wife open these once in a while. She rips it open, goes over to the garbage can, and buzzes through it. She yanks a couple of pizza coupons and tosses the rest in the trash. I asked her if she even looked at the other things in there. She said, "Yeah, it's always all the same,

though; it's just garbage." My wife is a window cleaner's ideal customer. Aside from her wisdom, I have tried out quite a few campaigns, and they have always failed. I can't recall one ever breaking even.

3) Kids' baseball fields. This is a great place to spend some money if you want to support your kid's team or local community. Just don't go into it expecting a direct financial return; it won't happen.

4) Groupon, Deal of the Day, and Big Deals. Skip 'em!

At the rates you need to offer to qualify for one of these, you can't possibly be making money. And they tend to attract the worst type of price-shopping customers.

5) Billboards.

I've lost a lot money on a lot of billboards over the years. I had some initial success with one. I got a great deal right outside my target market, and that led me to think I could replicate the success. I never could, and they always lost money.

6) Radio.

I've tried branding campaigns and direct offers. I've tried them during the slow season and busy season. They've always failed.

7) TV

Cable TV can offer a pretty clear way to target specific areas that may be of interest to you. I've tried it on three separate occasions and haven't been able to break even. I'm not saying it won't work for you, but does anyone even still have cable TV?

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CHAPTER 4: THE PHONE

Always Answer Your Phone

My friend and coworker John Lee answers the phone twenty-four hours a day. I'm not kidding; he sleeps with his Apple earbuds in and will answer a call at all hours. He says if you don't answer your phone or if you let a customer go to voice mail, "You are in business to go out of business."

I don't recommend this exact technique; resting your mind is important. But I do believe there is great wisdom in it. In today's fast-paced, mobile-Internet world, people demand an instant response. They want things now, now, now.

If they call and you don't pick up, chances are they will go down the line and call the next person they find on Google.

During the day, answer your phone whenever you can. If you can't pick up after hours, consider using an answering service. That way, even though they won't get you or your office staff, at least they will be getting a live person.

That real, live person will take the caller's info and forward it to you. People hang up on answering machines but not on real, live people. Even if you can't talk to the customer at that second, at least you have captured their info. Call them back as fast as possible, and get that job booked. Your competition won't do this; on the surface, it seems too hard to do.

During the busy season, call around to a few window cleaning companies. I bet anything you get 90% voice mails. In the busy

season, the customer wants their windows cleaned now. They don't want to call around for prices or find the best deal. They want to book an appointment and move on with the rest of their day.

Twenty-four hours a day, your customers should always get a real person. Phone services are cheap. Let's say you spend \$100 a month on a phone service. If that phone service captures just a couple of leads that convert to jobs, the whole thing pays for itself.

Cell Phone or Landline

When you are first starting out, a cell phone is perfect. You are mobile in the field, making things happen, taking calls, selling jobs—it's great!

Once you start to expand, you will be getting more calls than you can answer in one day. That's when you're going to want to have that number routed to your office instead.

The upside of a cell phone is the mobility and the easy access. There is also the added benefit of having the ability to text message with your clients. I know I would rather text with someone than pick up the phone. I think a lot of people are the same.

The downsides of the cell phone are phone numbers won't scale as you grow. You are constantly answering the phone and not getting much work done. Also, it's not as easy to pick a vanity number or one that's easily remembered. And, of course, there is the spotty reception in a lot of areas.

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Your Phone Number

Vanity or custom numbers used to be more important when a phone number had to be remembered or jotted down on the fly. Now, with the Internet, I don't think they're as important as they once were.

If you have the ability to pick your number, go for something with repeating numbers—for example, 234-467-5555 is better than 234-467-5982.

If you can pick your own number, try to get something sequential. If you can't, it's not the end of the world.

I just called Verizon to confirm, and they told me there is currently no way to pick your own cell number. You can specify the area code and first three digits in some cases. But when it comes to the final four digits, it's out of your control. I also just called my local phone company to confirm, and I could, in fact, pick one from a list of available numbers.

Your Voice Mail

If answering calls twenty-four hours a day is not an option, you will have to rely on voice mail. There are going to be times when you have no way of answering the call. If you can't get to the phone, consider a message on your machine as simple as this:

"Hi, and thank you for calling Sparta Window Cleaning. Your call is extremely important to us. Please leave your name and number at the beep, and I will get back to you right away. For

faster service, also consider texting us back at the same number. Thank you very much, and have a great day.”

Warning: There is a significant chance that the person calling will hang up on your voice mail and then call the next window cleaner they find via Google search. He who answers the phone first and fastest has the highest probability of winning.

Answering Service

You may want to consider an answering service at some point.

They can answer your phone twenty-four hours a day. They can forward you the messages in a segmented fashion. For example, they can text you all sales-related leads along with anybody looking to book an appointment. And they can then send any billing matters or customer-service-related items to your e-mail. Someone can get back to those people all at once later in the day. A sales lead is more time sensitive than a billing question.

I have used answering services on and off over the years. They have both pros and cons. The main pro is your phone is always answered, and you won’t lose any calls. The downside is the person answering won’t be able to answer technical questions. Knowing small details about your service and prices likely won’t be in their skill set. That can sometimes annoy customers.

And, of course, there is the added expense to consider. Answering services usually charge on a per-minute basis, which can add up faster than you would imagine.

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Collect Data

Check this out: We called this our prospective form, a simple piece of paper to put in your hand when talking to each new client. It helps you make sure you collect all the vital pieces of information.

You are going to want to get this information into your database, whether they choose to book an appointment (active customer) or are just thinking about it (prospective customer). All the collected data is important. Log it and get it into your database as fast as possible.

You can collect whatever data points you think will be most helpful.

Here is what we always tried to collect:



Scripts

You are going to receive the same basic types of phone calls over and over again. It's important to have a couple of scripts in place. The whole key to scripts is to use one without sounding scripted. Think about that. You need talking points—that is, things to cover in each conversation.

Although this isn't as important on the surface when you first start out, it will be important if you have aspirations for growth.

You have three basic phone scenarios:

- 1) Inbound calls. They will come in whenever.
- 2) Outbound transactional calls. You can control when and how they happen.
- 3) Outbound marketing-related calls. You can control when these happen, and they should be prescheduled. Put them on a set time on your calendar five days a week. I prefer mornings.

Scripts—Inbound Calls

Let's think about the most common types of phone calls you are going to receive:

- 1) “Hi, I have never used your service and would like a price quote.”
- 2) “I have used your service and would like to reschedule.”
- 3) “Hi, I have an appointment on the schedule and would like to cancel it.”
- 4) “Hi, I have an appointment on the schedule and would like to move it.”
- 5) “Hi, it's raining. Can I reschedule?”

When you think about it, the majority of your calls can be pigeon-holed into one of these five categories. If you have employ-

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ees, you'll likely need a sixth category for complaints. :)

Take a day to sit and jot down your thoughts on each of these types of calls. Start with bullet points, and then craft them into a script.

Here is my script on how to sell any residential job over the phone. For those who think you can't sell a job over the phone, I promise you, you're wrong. It is possible. I used this script to sell over seventy-five thousand residential window cleaning jobs over a thirteen-year period.



Doc - Phone Script Inbound Sell Residential

Phone script

Greeting

“Good morning/afternoon, Sparta Window Cleaning.” (Say it with a smile.)

Customer: “I’m interested in window cleaning.”

Notes: Introduce yourself with your first name, and tell them that you can help them.

Gather data

“I’m going to take a couple of pieces of information from you and ask you a few questions. When we’re done, I will have a very accurate price for you.”

Grab your prospective sheet and get the basics:

- 1) Name
- 2) Address
- 3) Phone number
- 4) How did you hear about us?
- 5) Do you have any coupons you would like to use?

Notes: Get their first name and use it frequently. People love to hear their name. Using it brings a sense of familiarity that will leave them more open mentally to scheduling with you.

Estimate the job

“OK, Nancy. I need to ask you some questions about your windows”:

- 6) “Do you open them by lifting them up and down or by cranking them out?”
- 7) “Do any of the windows have true divides or storms?”
- 8) “Do any of the windows need to be reached by a ladder on the inside of your home?”
- 9) “Do you have any skylights or chandeliers?”
- 10) “Do you know approximately how many windows are in your

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home?”

Notes: If you charge by the window, and I recommend you do, you will be able to give your customer a very accurate price by asking them the above five questions.

“OK, based on what you’re telling me, your window cleaning will be approximately \$_____. Now, keep in mind that we charge strictly on a per-window basis. If your count goes up or down, your price will fluctuate. Once we arrive on-site, the supervisor”—or you—“will take a walk around. We will add up what you have there and give you a 100% official price before we start.”

Notes: The key phrase from above is “based on what you’re telling me.”

“I would also like to mention we offer a variety of other services to enhance your home, such as pressure washing, roof cleaning, gutter cleaning, and so on. Can I interest you in a quote on any of those services?”

Notes: “Can I interest you” is rather lame because it opens the door for them to say no. It goes against the assumptive close tactic. But that’s OK because I don’t want to pressure or oversell anyone, and we will be using the assumptive close next.

Use the assumptive close

“We do work six days a week, so we can find an appointment time that’s just perfect for you. And we start as early as six a.m. My next available appointment in your area is next Tuesday. Do you prefer mornings or afternoons?”

Notes: And that, folks, is the assumptive close. It's brilliant, and it works! I didn't ask them if they wanted to book the appointment. I didn't give them the opportunity to say no. I asked them a question with only two possible answers, neither of which involved asking them if they wanted to schedule. I told them they were going to schedule. And they will! Don't open the door for them to say no.

Customer: "Oh, I'll take the morning appointment!"

Read the fine print

"All right, that sounds great, Nancy. I have you all set and entered into our computer system, and you're good to go. We do require an entirely refundable deposit to secure an appointment. What type of credit card would you like to put that on today? When the job is complete, you can pay the balance by check or cash, or we can just add it to your card."

Notes: Again, use an assumptive close. I didn't ask them if we could take a deposit. I asked them what type of card they would like to use. It came out of my mouth like the most natural thing in the world. If you get any friction on this point, ask them if they could reserve a flight or a hotel without a credit card deposit. In your head, always know that your time is no less valuable than anyone else's. A credit card deposit is in place, so your time is taken seriously. Say it with confidence, and they will hand it over instantly.

"Thanks, Nancy. We appreciate your business and look forward to coming out to your home next Tuesday. I will be giving you a reminder call the day before your appointment. Please don't

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forget, we require twenty-four hours' notice to cancel. Give me a heads-up if anything arises and you need to move your appointment.”

Notes: This is an excellent opportunity to collect their e-mail address. You can do your reminder by e-mail as a way to get the address. E-mail addresses are very valuable, so do what you can to acquire them.

“Thanks, Nancy. See you next Tuesday.” (Say it with a smile.)

Scripts—Outbound Calls—Transactional

- 1) Outbound returning call: “Hi, I’m returning your call about scheduling an appointment.”
- 2) The reminder call: “Hi, I’m calling to remind you about your appointment tomorrow.”
- 3) The follow-up call: “Hi, I’m calling to follow up on your appointment yesterday.”

These are scripts you should have. Think about how you can pepper them with marketing so that no contact with a customer gets wasted.

Outbound returning call

Simple enough, you can sell to customers over the phone and tell them about all the services you offer. This is a great opportunity to schedule them, upsell them, and ask for a referral.

On the surface, scripts two and three look strictly transactional. However, you have many opportunities to include a marketing message. You can pursue many possibilities and different angles.

The reminder call

“Hi, Nancy. This is Chris from Sparta Window Cleaning. I’m just calling to remind you about your appointment tomorrow. We have you set for an arrival time between ten and noon. Please have someone home at the time of service. We need to get in to remove your screens and do the insides of your windows. Don’t forget, we also offer roof cleaning, pressure washing, and gutter cleaning. We would be happy to provide you with an estimate for these services while we are out there. If you have any friends or family in the area who could take advantage of our services, please let us know. We would love an introduction.”



Doc - Phone Script Reminder Call

I made a standard customer-service transactional phone call and then used it as an opportunity not only to market our other services we offer but also again to ask for a referral. Think of how many transactional-type calls like this you need to make. Every one of them is an upsell and referral opportunity.

The follow-up call

“Hi, Nancy, this is Chris with Sparta Window Cleaning. How are you today? I don’t want to take up much of your time. I just wanted to follow up on yesterday’s appointment. I want to confirm everything turned out OK.

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“Great, glad to hear it. Well, thank you very much. I appreciate your kind words. It means a lot to us. As a small family business, this type of feedback is extremely valuable. Again, if you know of anyone who could take advantage of our service, we would love to hear from them. Also, our supervisor, Bob, brought back some notes from your home and pricing on other services we offer. We have those all entered into our computer system. If you ever need us or would like to hear about the other services we offer, we are only a phone call away.”



Doc - Phone Script Follow Up Call

Scripts—Outbound Calls—Marketing Related

1) “Hi, I’m calling to get you back on the schedule. It’s been X days since your last appointment.”

This is where the real money is. You have produced a satisfied customer, and X amount of time has passed. It’s easy to give these people a call out of nowhere and reschedule them. As a matter of fact, it’s your duty and obligation to do so. You run a company that provides exceptional customer service. Great customer service includes reminding your clients it’s time to do the windows again.

It’s as simple as this:

“Hi, Nancy. This is Chris from Sparta Window Cleaning. How are you today? Great, glad to hear it. I’m just giving you a call because it’s been eleven months since your last service. We are going to be in your area next week, and we would love to get you

back on our schedule. And don't forget, we have the prices in our system from last year, and we can honor them with no problem. Oh, and by the way, pressure washing your whole house would be only X dollars, and your roof and gutters would be only X dollars."

I promise you will be pleasantly surprised at how many people are thrilled to death that you called. Yeah, they missed your e-mails, postcards, and newspaper ads. Be thankful you gave them the courtesy reminder. They will be.

Once you have been in business for a year, you should have a growing list of these repeat customers. You should have enough to call a few on a daily basis. You don't need to call them yourself, but someone definitely should. It's easy money, and you are providing great service. Don't hesitate to remind them once a year unless, of course, they ask you not to.

Do-not-call list?

As of this writing in 2016, the National Do Not Call Registry does not apply to people with whom you have a prior business relationship. For further details read the following:

donotcall.gov/faq/faqbusiness.aspx#who

It says,

"A telemarketer or seller may call a consumer with whom it has an established business relationship for up to 18 months after the consumer's last purchase, delivery, or payment—even if the consumer's number is on the National Do Not Call Registry. In

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addition, a company may call a consumer for up to three months after the consumer makes an inquiry...One caveat: If a consumer asks a company not to call, the company may not call, even if there is an established business relationship.”

On-Hold Music

If you have one of those fancy phone systems, don't waste time with crappy elevator music. Use it as an opportunity to play an upsell message. It can say something as simple as this:

“Your call is very important to us; we will be with you in just a moment. When the agent returns to your call, don't forget to ask them about our fabulous spring specials. We have great deals on all our most popular services: window cleaning, pressure washing, gutter cleaning, and now roof cleaning. Is your roof looking moldy? Ask us about our new safe, effective way to remove mold and moss from your roof.”

In a perfect world, you would never leave someone on hold. As a matter of fact, you should do everything in your power to avoid it. It's annoying, and it upsets customers and leaves the door open for them to hang up on you. But if you must leave someone on hold and you have the ability, you may as well use it as a marketing opportunity.

Once you script out your on-hold message, consider having it read by a professional voice-over artist. I have used voicebunny.com and have been pleased with their work. I got a professional-sounding message from a former radio guy for fifteen bucks. You can't beat that.

VoIP Sucks

When choosing a phone system, be wary of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services. For an example of VoIP services, look at RingCentral, CallFire, or Grasshopper. They offer a ton of awesome features for a great price.

These are the next level of advanced stuff: forwarding, call-tracking reports, on-hold music, etc. The only problem is that the voice quality sucks. Get yourself a couple of free or low-cost trials and confirm for yourself. Although the price may be appealing, I believe it is all counteracted by the poor sound quality.

Part of being able to sell well on the phone is making sure the customer is clearly able to hear what you are saying.

But more important than that, you must be able to hear what's going on with the person you're talking to.

To really take control of and steer the conversation, you need to be able to hear the little things in their voices—the sighs, the pauses, the ahems. It's crucial to be able to pick up these things. You have to understand their tone and demeanor at all times. It's hard to do that over VoIP. The technology is just not there yet. Maybe it will be by the time you're reading this, but I doubt it.

Take Control of the Call

I mentioned taking control of the call. To market and sell well over the phone, you need to have complete control of the call.

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You need to take the call over and command what direction it goes in. You need to be able to lead the customer where you want them to go and say the things you want them to say. The ability to do so is the whole key and trick to closing jobs on the phone effectively.

It won't come naturally at first; if anything, it will be hard to do. It will require lots of practice—years, actually. But once you master it, you will be shocked at how easy it is to close jobs. Practice on your spouse. Practice on your friends. Practice whenever you can. Remember, the more you can control the phone call, the more jobs you can close.

Don't Sound Scripted

Use a script, but don't sound scripted. This is worth mentioning again. Have a script or, at the very least, talking points on each type of call you deal with. There is a best way to do everything; if it's documented, it's easier to repeat over and over again. Not sounding scripted is the whole trick. To do it effectively, you need to have the talking points committed to memory. They should flow effortlessly from your mouth like water. Practice, practice, practice!

Frequency

How often should you call a past client? That's up to you. I wouldn't feel comfortable calling more than once or twice a year, maximum. And I don't think I would want to receive a sales call from someone more than once or twice a year. But I do know of some very successful companies in the industry that call their

clients four to six times a year! They wouldn't be doing it if it didn't work.

Text Messaging

Text messaging marketing is starting to become more popular. Check out this service: mozeo.com. It allows you to have customers auto opt in to receive promotional messages. The site gives you a dashboard and the ability to create custom phrases and numbers. You might consider sending out a quarterly coupon or message during the slow periods. To get your customers to opt in, you could put the following snippet of text on your website and paperwork:

"Text cleanwindow to 45876 to receive quarterly discounts and promotions."

It's that simple. Put that phrase on your materials, and sit back and relax while your list grows. Fire off a message a couple of times a year, and watch the work roll in.

Try it out: "Text windowcleaner to 24587." That's my list, and it will send you one super deal per month. That's it, that's all.

Auto-dialers

Auto-dialers are way annoying and should be illegal. I don't recommend using them. I did, however, come across a service called slybrodcast.com. I have been playing around with it the past year or so with success.

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The site allows you to upload a voice file—anything you want—in almost any voice format. The last one I did I just recorded with my iPhone's voice app. It then allows you to upload a list of people you would like to call. Then, instead of calling them, it places a voice mail on their phone. It's a neat concept, and it actually works. Their phone doesn't even ring. All of a sudden, they just have a voice mail to listen to.

You can place a message on thousands of phones at once. You don't interrupt people with a phone call, and it's easy enough for them to call you back if they choose. As of this writing, it works only on cell phones. I would consider using this to advertise a new product or service to my existing customers or even for fall gutter cleaning appointments. Check it out. It's easy to set up and affordable.

CHAPTER 5 WEBSITE BASICS

Your Home Base

Consider a website your home base on the Internet. Your website is a location online for all your marketing activities to stem from. All your campaigns and all your work should originate from here. This is where campaigns and programs should start before you push them out to the world.

Can you get by these days without a website? Sure, but you're going to be only getting by. To really flourish and get the company moving, you need a website. Think about it. Would you call a company to perform a service at your home if you could find no record of them online? I know I would be hesitant, and I'm not even your target market.

Your Branding Starts Here

As mentioned, your company needs to have a consistent look across all your materials. Think similar fonts, colors, and imagery across everything. Your website should have a similar look and feel to your vehicles and advertising, as well as your client-facing paperwork and any other marketing items you use.

The Center of All Your Campaigns

Your company will run a multitude of marketing campaigns across a few different media. It only makes sense that they all originate from your website. Everything leads back to this. Your

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website is the center of your marketing universe. Tie everything back to your company here. Campaigns, customer contact, promotions—everything.

Your website should also help you quite a bit with providing customer service. Include basic information, such as hours of operation and contact info. It's there to help save time for both you and the customer.

Your website is always on. When set up correctly, it can be your twenty-four-seven salesperson. It never needs a break, never calls in sick, and is always there for your customers. Imagine waking up in the morning and finding scheduled jobs from customers who are presold on your services and are ready to hand over money. It's possible with a properly set-up website.

DIY or Hire a Pro

Your primary goal every day as the owner is to find ways to generate money for the business. When you start trying to do every little thing yourself, things get spread thin. You've heard the expression "jack of all trades, master of none," right? That's what happens when you do everything yourself. Nothing is special because you're doing everything with limited knowledge. And you're doing things with limited knowledge because there isn't enough time in the day to become an expert.

So I will ask you: What is going to convert your potential clients better? A mediocre website you built yourself, or a professionally designed one you hired someone to build?

Then consider the time aspect. Let's say the cost of a nice, simple website is \$1,500. How long would it take you to earn that \$1,500? How long would it take you to make the website and have it be of equal caliber?

My suggestion is have a pro design the site, but learn to manipulate it and make changes yourself. A little working knowledge will pay off. I think of this the same way I do about graphic design. Have a professional build the foundation. Then, get enough working knowledge to make small changes. At the least, make sure you can add photos, adjust copy, and add pages and/or blog posts.

Having the ability to do that will allow you to move much quicker as a company. If you have an idea or plan, you can act on it right away.

This is better than having to send ideas off to a designer and wait a week for the changes. And then once those changes have been made, maybe they're not quite right. Maybe you want to make one more small tweak. You need to be able to do this yourself, or you will lose all momentum. Being able to do something in real time is powerful.

Learn a little WordPress because almost 20% of the sites on the Internet use it. It will likely power your site. It was originally designed for blogging, but it has morphed into a publishing platform.

One of the main advantages of WordPress is its ease of use. If you spend a weekend studying it, you will have no problem doing the basics. It also has myriad free themes and add-ons available.

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In my opinion, the best-case scenario is to have a professionally designed site while you maintain the ability to make small changes as needed.

Pay as You Go

Lately, a few companies that have sprung up have adopted a pay-as-you-go model. They charge a monthly fee and completely manage every aspect of the website for you.

They don't just set up and forget about it. They handle all the ongoing development and make small weekly changes. This optimizes the number of leads you receive, as well as how visible your site is in the search engine results.

Pay-as-you-go companies continually monitor how many of your website visitors are becoming customers, and then they use that data to make improvements to your website. Thus, over time, your website conversion rate will keep improving, and you'll win more customers.

If you had asked me about this model a year ago, I wouldn't have recommended it. But I'm beginning to see the value in services like these. One of these companies I would recommend is Hatch. Check them out at hatchspot.com.

If you are looking for a completely hands-off approach, they are a great choice. If you would like to see an example of their work, go to spartawindowcleaning.com.

CHAPTER 6: WEBSITE ADVANCED

Working with a Developer

I have worked with many developers over the years, both in the United States and offshore, and the process is usually the same.

The number-one point I want to get across is communication, which is the essence of how to translate your ideas of what you want to have done to the developer in a low-friction way.

Tips:

- 1) Show them examples of things you like and don't like.
- 2) Hand draw or sketch layouts of what you're looking for.
- 3) Use screenshots and screen recordings to capture and convey your ideas.

Two free tools to help with this are as follows:

Awesome Screenshot is a program that lets you take screenshots and draw ideas over them.

QuickCast is a program that will allow you to take short videos of the computer screen—known as a screencast.

- 4) Be specific. Developers are not mind readers. Unless you work with one for years, they won't know exactly how you like things. Type out the exact copy and details of what you want.

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Overseas Developers

Much like anything else, you can get a foreign version for cheaper. Professional developers from Russia, India, or the Philippines are available for affordable prices. A comparable US-based developer can charge up to ten times the amount as an overseas developer.

Pros: Affordability and expertise

Cons: Communication problems, reliability, and off-hours working

So, although you will save money up front, you are going to pay for it on the back end with time. Everything takes more effort, and there will be way more back and forth.

Today, I use overseas developers all the time. But the key is I work with the same people on a regular basis. If this is your first time getting work done, I would recommend sticking with a US-based developer. It will save you a lot of up-front aggravation and get the whole project completed quicker.

Web Tools—ResponsiBid

If you are going to go to the trouble of putting together bids and estimates, you need to be using ResponsiBid. It makes your proposals look good, gives good upsells, and follows up with every prospect so that you close the most jobs possible. It does all the stuff that no one has time for.

If you'd like to see how it works on a website, cruise on over to

my website and check out spartawindowcleaning.com. Click on “Instant Attention.”

The website part of ResponsiBid is great because it is supereasy to install quickly on your website. It transforms your company into Amazon.com-like status in a beautiful way. Your potential customers can get a gorgeous quote on your services while putting them into your automated and systematized follow-up methods that ResponsiBid provides. The customer gets what they want (a quick and pressure-free quote), and you get what you want (a perfectly qualified lead into your sales funnel). Think of this part as a twenty-four-seven, perfectly trained salesperson on your website. Every single person who comes to your site is usually coming there for one of two reasons: to contact you in some way or to get a price. ResponsiBid makes it painless for you and the customer.

Aside from the website bidding, ResponsiBid provides a bidding system for you over the phone or in person and keeps all your bids in one place. Then, the automation makes sure they are all moving toward booking you a job. There are also some really neat reports to help you see how you compare to the industry and how your lead sources compare to each other. Check it out here: symplosize.com/responsibid.

Web Tools—Zopim

Communicate with visitors in real time on your website. Whereas ResponsiBid helps you sell while you’re off-line, a Live Chat widget will help you sell while you’re online. If someone is in your office full time, it makes sense to have this on your website.

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It's a tiny snippet of code injected into your site that you can access via an admin chat interface login.

Once you log in, the widget becomes active. If a visitor on your site has a question, they just type it in, and you can give them an immediate, real-time answer. It's like texting with someone but over the computer. You can also set it to engage proactively with people on your site according to their actions. For example, you can set it up to ping them if they go idle on a certain page for longer than X seconds, just to see if they have a question or if you can help in any way.

This is an example of what it looks like from the customer's perspective:

Think of it this way: people always have questions. If your company is the one that can answer them in real time, you will close more leads than your competition.

We started using this in my business in 2011. The instant we did, close rates via the website skyrocketed. Several companies offer this service; I have tried a few but stuck with Zopim because of its ease of use. We use a five-agent plan and try to have someone logged in to the service twenty-four hours a day. That might be a little overkill for your needs. If you have someone signed into it while they are in the office, you'll be ahead of the game. As of this writing, March 2016, Zopim has a free light version of the software you can use: zopim.com/pricing/.



Web Tools—Remarketing

Let's talk remarketing. A pixel or a tag is a tiny piece of code inserted into your website. It allows you to identify anonymously someone who visited your website on another platform.

Have you ever seen an ad on Facebook or on a Google search result for a product or service you just recently looked at? If so, you have been remarketed to.

This is a powerful marketing method that I can't recommend enough. Even if you have no intention of using the data now, there is no harm in setting it up. You can decide to flip it on at any point in the future.

When the time comes that you want to try it out, you won't have to wait for the long data-collection period to happen. You can put a pixel on any particular page on your website or just your home page.

How many times have you gone to buy something and for one reason or another couldn't complete the transaction? Many times, I guarantee it. However, with remarketing ability, you are able to give your website visitor the thought that, "Oh yeah, I needed my windows cleaned. There's that company's ad again. I'm going to call them now."

It's much easier to close a warm lead of someone who at some point expressed interest in your services than it is to convince an uninterested cold lead. Your ads become much more relevant and personal. You can even take this a step further and put pixels on different pages of your website.

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For example, maybe you have a page on gutter cleaning. Set the pixel on it. Then, in the fall, you can flip on advertising as the service is in season. A customer looks at your page and then later sees an ad for your company. That's powerful stuff!

Many companies offer this service, with Google and Facebook being the most powerful and popular. I have used this technology on both of these platforms and will continue to do so. They are simple enough to use and figure out. Plus, they are affordable enough for you to experiment with to test the waters. You can turn it on and off anytime you want. Controlling your budget is easy; you can start with as little as five bucks a day without having to make any ongoing commitment.

Privacy isn't much of a concern; all data is anonymous and confidential. No one ever, ever sees it or has access to it.

You can get started here:
facebook.com/business
google.com/ads

Web Tools—Google My Business

Google owns the vast majority of search results. When you go to search for something, you don't "Yahoo it" or "Bing it"; you "Google it." Hence, you want to do everything within your power to conform your website and business to Google's programs.

Although they don't come out and state that use of their products is a ranking signal, I believe it to be. A ranking signal is a measurement or metric that Google uses. It helps them deter-

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mine where to rank your site against others in the search engine results page (SERP).

I highly recommend the use of Google My Business. Doing so will have a positive impact on your company's visibility in the search results. Go to google.com/business and set up a page for yourself. It's supereasy, especially when you are already logged in to your Google account.

It's going to ask you for some basic information about your business, such as hours of operation, phone number, URL, etc.

It will also prompt you to upload photos of work performed and/or your office location. No piece of data is 100% essential to enter or upload. But I can tell you, the more information you give them, the happier they are, and the better your site will rank. Comply when you can!

Your dashboard will look something like this:



It gives you space to view your traffic results and make posts about your business, as well as an area to manage reviews and

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upload photos. These are all things that will help increase your visibility in the SERP. Like most Google services, it's free.

Here is your standard SERP:

Notice the five elements I have laid out:

- 1) Search bar and term
- 2) Organic result
- 3) Google My Business
- 4) Reviews!
- 5) Review capture prompt

The screenshot shows a Google search results page for the query "window cleaning supplies".

1) Search bar and term: The search bar at the top contains the query "window cleaning supplies".

2) Organic result: The first organic result is "Window Cleaning Supplies - Jracenstein.com", which includes a snippet about eco-friendly services and a phone number.

3) Google My Business: The second organic result is "Window Cleaning Supplies & Water Fed Pole Equipment", which includes a snippet about professional window cleaning supplies and a physical address.

4) Reviews: A review card for "Window Cleaning Resource" is displayed, showing a 4.9 rating, 9 reviews, and the business's address and phone number.

5) Review capture prompt: A "Write a review" button is located at the bottom right of the review card.

Item one is the search term. That's easy. Item two I rank in the

number one spot in the natural organic (free listings). That's great!

But having a Google My Business account lets me have this whole other element on the SERP for free. Once you connect your account and get it set up, it will start to appear in the right-hand column.

The reviews are one of the most important elements. We will talk about reviews in general later on. But I want to mention that if there's one place in the world you wish to have good, positive reviews of your service, it's here. There is no public documentation stating that positive Google reviews are a ranking signal. My analytics reports lead me to believe it's true, though. They show a high correlation between reviews and upticks in organic traffic patterns.

Web Tools—Google Webmaster Tools

Google Webmaster Tools recently changed its name to Google Search Console. It is a free program that allows you to check the index status of your website. You can use it to view your site's visibility on the Internet, and it enables you to see your site through Google's eyes.

Make sure you have it installed on your site and have the contact information on it reported to you. For the most part, you can set this up to review it every now and then, and then you can forget about it. If Google encounters a problem with your website, they will let you know. If there is a missing page or a blocked resource, the system will e-mail and alert you to the problem.

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There is a good chance you'll never need to use it. But if something comes up, you will be glad you did set it up.

Web Tools—Google Analytics

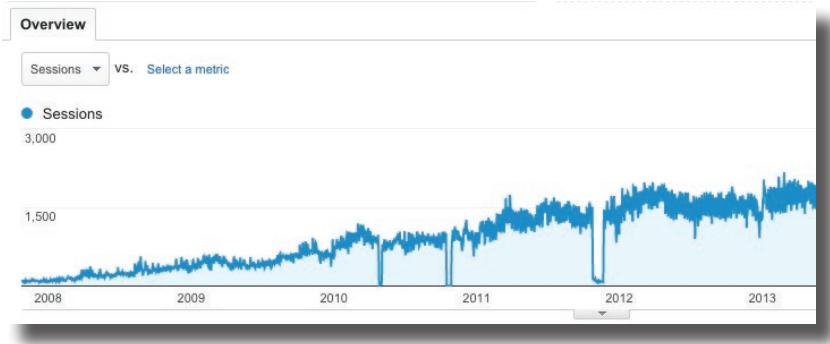
Yes, this is another free product from Google. This is one of the more important and useful ones. Have it set up the day your website goes live. Like the other Google products, it's installed with a simple snippet of code.

Google Analytics then gathers tons of useful data quietly in the background. Even if you're not going to use it now, install it and start collecting data. It will show you as much or as little data as you want to see about the people who visit your site. Like your pixel-tracking data, the stuff that's collected is all anonymous.

It will tell you that you had 122 visitors from Sussex County, New Jersey, visit your website on an iPhone 6 last month. But it won't tell you who they are or provide any information that would connect the data to a real person. It collects all the general stuff without actually identifying who they are.

Even if you have no interest in reviewing this type of data now, the time will likely come when you will want to. When I first set up my site, I didn't have a huge interest in reviewing the data. But a year later, when I caught the data bug, it was cool to log in and view all the information it had collected in the past year.

Here is a snapshot of one of the primary graphs Google Analytics provides. It shows our increase in web traffic over a six-year period. It looks like progress to me!



Although the above graph is a vanity metric, it is still important to collect and check out every once in a while. You don't even have to log in; you can set it up to just auto e-mail you a report at any frequency you pick.

The four most important reports are as follows:

- 1) Traffic overview. Are you up or down? Why?
- 2) Traffic-sources overview. Where did your traffic come from this period? What sources went up. What went down? This will help you pinpoint new potential growth opportunities and identify problems.
- 3) Social overview. This shows you what type of traffic you are getting from social media activity.
- 4) Exit pages. If you have more than a couple of pages on your site, this report is worth looking at. From what pages are people most frequently exiting your site? This can be important in helping identify potential problems.

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SEO

SEO stands for “search engine optimization.” This is the process of optimizing your site to rank as high as possible in search engine results for a select set of terms.

You can use on-site and off-site SEO techniques to boost your website’s rankings. With off-site techniques, the market is always changing. What worked yesterday is dead today, and what’s working today could be dead tomorrow. I don’t want to pass on any irrelevant information that will have expired by the time you read this.

If you have an interest in off-site SEO techniques, bookmark these three websites. Give them a read on an ongoing basis, and you will be up to speed with the ever-changing SEO landscape:

searchenginejournal.com

moz.com/blog

searchenginewatch.com

With on-site SEO, the basics have remained the same for a while. Below, I go over a few relevant points and things I think you should be doing as a website owner. Think of on-site work as building a house. You want to build it right the first time. It needs a nice, strong foundation and quality materials throughout. It’s the same thing with your website. Set it up right from the beginning while keeping in mind the five things Google wants to see:

- 1) Good, relevant content (GRC)

- 2) Title tag
- 3) Good URL structure
- 4) Mobile friendly
- 5) Fast loading speed, compressed images

Good, relevant content

It's such a cliché. GRC has been talked about for so long, but most people still don't get it. GRC is useful information that is relevant to what your potential customer is searching for. It's good copy, images, or video related to the particular page on your site.

Let's say you have a page on your site about gutter cleaning. Here are a few examples of GRC you could have on that page:

- It must be original text written by you about gutter cleaning in general.
- Explain why gutter cleaning is an important home-maintenance activity.
- Explain how not having it done can cause potential problems.
- How can your company assist the potential customer with their problem?
- Include photos of the service performed, as well as

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before-and-after photos of the inside of a gutter and photos of a beautiful home with clean gutters.

- Maybe include a video showing how you perform the service.
- Include testimonials from customers talking about how your company helped them with their gutters.

Everything we mentioned is relevant to gutter cleaning only. Oh, you also offer pressure washing? That's great, but don't talk about it on your page about gutter cleaning. Talk about it on the page dedicated to pressure washing with its own unique, relevant copy.

I can't stress the word *unique* enough. Do not—I repeat, do not—go to someone else's site and copy and paste text into your site. Do not use other people's images, either. Even if your photos suck and your text blows, using your own is better than copying someone else's. Google is smart; they will know instantly, and you will get penalized for it. Penalized? Yes, if your page is ranking for a particular term or concept, it will likely drop in rankings.

Creating good, unique content can be a pain in the ass. You can say only so many things about window cleaning. But you can consider it unique if it's written in your natural tone and peppered with pictures you took.

Title tag

Each page on your website gets a title, and it's what first shows

up on a SERP. It helps tell Google and your potential visitors what this page of your site is about.

Take a few minutes to put all the different pages of your site into a spreadsheet, and lay out all your page titles. This is a good way to see what you have and what other pages you can potentially build in the future. These days, Google is restricting the view of the title tag to fifty or sixty characters. Putting them into a spreadsheet will help ensure you are using the proper length as well.

Download this template. It will help you identify your site pages and structure your data properly.



Sheet - SEO Title Tag Counter

Also, check out the Title Tag Preview Tool by Moz to preview what your title tag will look like in the Google search results.

moz.com/blog/new-title-tag-guidelines-preview-tool

Good URL structure

A good URL:

spartawindowcleaning.com/showroom/home-window-cleaning

A bad URL:

spartawindowcleaning.com/page/2467

Notice the difference? One is read easier by Google and humans! This is a must.

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Mobile friendly

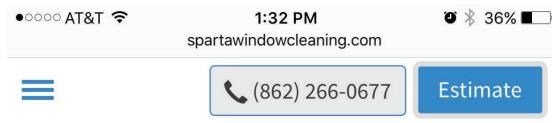
This becomes more important every day. Check this out:

	Device Category <small>?</small>	Sessions <small>?</small> <small>↓</small>
		7.64% <small>▲</small> 18,281 vs 16,983
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. desktop	
	Oct 26, 2015 - Nov 25, 2015	9,095 (49.75%)
	Sep 25, 2015 - Oct 25, 2015	8,316 (48.97%)
	% Change	9.37%
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. mobile	
	Oct 26, 2015 - Nov 25, 2015	7,333 (40.11%)
	Sep 25, 2015 - Oct 25, 2015	6,894 (40.59%)
	% Change	6.37%
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. tablet	
	Oct 26, 2015 - Nov 25, 2015	1,853 (10.14%)
	Sep 25, 2015 - Oct 25, 2015	1,773 (10.44%)
	% Change	4.51%

It's official! My website is now getting more traffic from mobile devices than from desktop computers. And the trend is increasing each month. How your site looks on a mobile device is more important than how it looks on a desktop. In the past, the inverse would have been true, but not anymore, and the stats prove it. This is a great example of how Google Analytics can help your marketing efforts.

Look at your site from a couple of different devices—iPhone, Android, and different tablets—and see how it functions. How your site behaves on a phone is more important than how it works on a computer screen. Yes, seriously.

Check out this screenshot of my Sparta Window Cleaning site. Notice the persistent phone number. That makes it effortless for a potential customer to look you up and contact you right away.



SPARTA

WINDOW CLEANING



Rated #1 on
WindowCleaning.com

Experience the best in home window cleaning
today.

Leave a review

Like

{ 1 }

Tweet

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Fast loading speed, compressed images

Fact: Page speed is one of the two hundred ranking signals identified by Moz.

Fact: Slow websites are annoying to use and cause people to leave your site and find a quicker one.

According to Search Engine Journal:

- Forty-seven percent of web users expect a website to load in under two seconds.
- Seventy-five percent of consumers will visit a competitor's site instead of dealing with a slow page.

Usually, you can blame slow page speed on server optimization. Poorly optimized content and images are also culprits.

Use this free tool to optimize your images:
kraken.io

Use these sites to check your page speed. They will pinpoint for you exactly what elements on your site are slowing things down.
developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed
tools.pingdom.com

Photo Album

Have a photo album page or a page with past projects on your website. Remember at the beginning of the book when I talked

about taking lots of pictures? Post the gems here—with permission, of course. It's a great place to post your best photos. Use ones showing beautiful homes that fit your target market. Include before-and-after photos, as well as photos of happy customers. Use anything that shows your prospective customers what they can expect.

Ongoing Content Creation

Ongoing content creation is a challenge for most companies. It doesn't have to be, though. If you plan for it and schedule it, the whole thing will come together.

What do I mean by ongoing content creation? It's creating content for your website on a continual, planned-out basis. This can be blog posts, photo uploads, reviews, and testimonials. Or it can be a new picture-gallery posting and new-page creation. Google wants to see new stuff happening on your website on a regular basis. Your customers do, as well. All your marketing efforts will be easier if you have fresh content to send out on a regular basis.

The following are direct examples of things you can do:

- 1) Blog posts
- 2) Photo uploads of new projects you have completed
- 3) Video uploads of anything related to your company

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4) Ongoing customer-review uploads

5) New landing-page creation

Blogging

For most people, numbers two through five above are no sweat; it's blogging where they get hung up. That's good news for you. If it's hard to do, your competition won't likely try it. What in the world should you write about?

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

1) Seasonal tips for homeowners

- Seven ways to winterize your house
- Eight reasons why you should have your gutter cleaning done twice a year
- Summer is coming; four simple things you can do to cut down on your air-conditioning bill
- The spring-cleaning checklist; ten must-have items to make your spring cleaning a breeze

2) Tips on hiring a service contractor for your home

3) Tips on touching up the windows between professional cleanings

4) Local charities you work with or donate to

You get the idea. Curate and create useful stuff for homeowners and recycle it on your site in your own words. Prospective customers and Google will appreciate it. You can also use these blog posts in conjunction with a quarterly e-mail to your customer base. It's nice to send useful stuff to the customers instead of just the "buy, buy, buy" stuff.

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CHAPTER 7: E-MAIL

E-mail marketing is the act of sending a commercial message to a group of people by using e-mail. It is one of my favorite methods to market to my customers. E-mail is personal, broad reaching, and mostly free to do. You can break it down and look at it two different ways: transactional and marketing.

Part 1—Transactional E-mail

Think of transactional e-mail as the back and forth you have with a client. It can occur when someone is reaching out to you for more information or booking or changing an appointment time. In other words, it involves any back and forth between your company and a potential customer over the Internet.

Your e-mail is on your website; you have a contact form. It's listed on your business card and transactional paperwork. People are going to e-mail you all the time. Use it to your advantage!

Consider each one of those interactions and conversations as a way to add value and an opportunity to reinforce your brand message and relationship with each conversation.

The basics

Have an “@yourdomain” e-mail address.

Please take no offense at this, but having an “@gmail,” “@hotmail,” “@yahoo,” or anything but “@yourdomain” is unprofes-

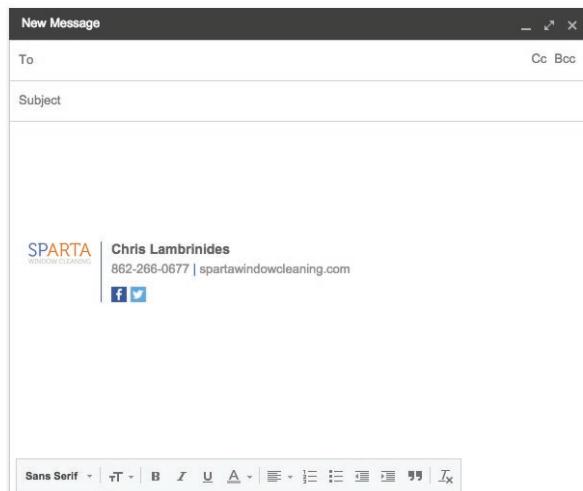
sional. Even if you don't have a website, you should have an “@
yourdomain” e-mail address.

By *@yourdomain*, this is what I mean: chris@spartawindow-cleaning.com.

If you don't have one, cruise over to GoDaddy or Google and pick one out. It will cost you only \$10 a year. I would also recommend using Google Apps for Work to host the e-mail account. For \$5 a month, you can manage your “@yourdomain” e-mail address from the Gmail interface. On top of that, you can connect all the free Google features I recommended earlier into one account.

Have a Great Signature

Here is an example of a great e-mail signature:



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It has all the necessary elements: my name, small company logo, URL, phone number, and social media links. You can create a great signature in your e-mail client or with a browser extension. Be sure you have one, and consider keeping it small and minimalist, as I have done in the example. It adds an element of professionalism and gives the reader a number of convenient ways to contact you. If you are in the business of scheduling lots of work for your company, the more ways a client can contact you, the better.

Speed

Respond fast and in a professional way. People expect a quick response to e-mail. The faster you can get back to them with an answer or acknowledgment, the better. Consider setting an internal policy of how fast you will always respond to an e-mail. Maybe it's one hour, maybe it's twelve hours. Choose what's right for you, and try to stick to it. If you are working in the field all day, consider having someone assist you with quick responses. This could be an office staff member or even your spouse. The important thing is to give people a quick, helpful response. The faster you can get them what they need, the happier they will be.

Canned Responses

A canned response is a prewritten e-mail sent to someone who has e-mailed you first.

Do you find yourself answering the same six or seven e-mails over and over again? It can get frustrating, and the frustration

spills over into your typing and responses. Sometimes you can fire off a great e-mail, and sometimes your heart is not into it.

Likely, you will notice a pattern with the e-mails you start to receive. They will look something like this:

- 1) How much do you charge?
- 2) I need to book an appointment.
- 3) I need to schedule an appointment.
- 4) It's supposed to rain. What are we going to do?
- 5) I need to cancel an appointment.
- 6) Can you price match a competitor?

It makes sense to have a prewritten “best response” to all these common e-mails so you won’t be explaining the same things repeatedly. Also, this will ensure you give each person an excellent reply to their question. So, to save time and lead customers in the direction you want to take them, have a few canned responses queued up and ready to go.

Consider it as an online FAQ but sent in e-mail form as a direct response to a question. You can be up and running with canned responses in Gmail within a few minutes.

Consider taking a day and writing out those five or six regular e-mails. Put a lot of thought into them, and make them perfect. Include tons of information that answers all the possible ques-

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tions and more.

Go to your Gmail account and set these up as canned responses. Here's how you do that. First, go to settings then "Labs," find "canned responses," and click "Enable." Compose an e-mail you find yourself writing often and hit "Save."

Part 2—Marketing E-mail

Send premade, automated outbound e-mail to your customers and prospective customers. It's uncomplicated, effective, and usually free.

How to start

I recommend using MailChimp for your bulk e-mail delivery. It is the top choice of professional e-mail marketers, and it has all the best bells and whistles. Reporting, list management, and campaign creation are all included free of charge.

MailChimp is completely free to use forever. The only condition is you have two thousand or fewer contacts and are sending fewer than twelve thousand e-mails per month. I hope you eventually get enough clients in there that MailChimp starts charging you. It's not that I don't want you to be able to use it for free; rather, having more than two thousand clients to e-mail to is a good problem to have.

There is a slight learning curve to get everything set up, and I am going to walk you through the necessary steps below. Getting

this all set up and implemented is possible to do in one day. Go to mailchimp.com to get signed up.

Content

What should you send or e-mail to people? It is best to define your content sources early. Keep a running list of possible topics, ideas, and inspiration sources. The goal is to leverage your list of existing customers to make more appointments with you. You want to use it to remind them it's time to get the window cleaned again or to urge them to get back on the schedule because you have this great promo going on. You also want to use it to advertise other products and services you offer.

Once you develop a sizable client base, you can get by with almost no marketing budget. It's completely possible do the majority of your marketing for free through e-mail.

Consider sending the following:

- 1) Reminders
- 2) Promotions—Seasonal specials
- 3) Useful information
- 4) Upsells and info about other services

The whole key is to package all four of the above into one e-mail.

You can take content from current marketing programs you're doing. These include current offers and advertisements, your

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blog's content, and content from social media updates. Or you could craft a simple, unique direct offer.

Plan for It

Just like all the other methods we have talked about so far, if you want this to come together and happen on a regular basis in an automated fashion, you have to plan for it. Put it right up there on your marketing calendar.

Frequency

How often should you send one out? I would consider the following:

Existing customers—Quarterly

Prospective customers—Twice a year

Lists

Whom should you send to? It is appropriate for you to e-mail current and prospective clients and customers. The former are people who have inquired about your service but never actually scheduled or booked an appointment.

Creating and Managing Lists

MailChimp makes it easy to work with and maintain lists of peo-

ple. Think of it this way: The ideal situation would be to have all your customers in an e-mail program or software. The people listed in the software are broken down and categorized in a logical fashion.

That's where different lists come in handy. Here are some lists I would recommend keeping:

- 1) Prospective customers
- 2) Active customers
- 3) Used our window cleaning service
- 4) Used our pressure washing service
- 5) Used our gutter cleaning service

Using lists will help you ensure you are segmenting your customers the right way. That will assist you in sending the right marketing message to the right client at the right time.

Creating lists is easy in MailChimp.

Log in, click “Lists,” and then click “Create List.” You will have to assign a unique name to the list and select a “From e-mail” address. Then, you just have to put in the appropriate customer data. You can add subscribers one at a time, or you can bulk import them. It allows you to upload a plain list of them or import a CSV/Google Sheets file.

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Groups

The lists also have a “Group Feature,” which helps you segment a customer even further. For example, within your “Active Customers” list, you may want to separate homes in two ways: regular houses and townhouses.

This would come in handy if you were going to send an e-mail about fall gutter cleaning services. Having a group of homeowners and a group of townhouses will assure that you don’t send the wrong message. It doesn’t make any sense to send a message about gutter cleaning to people who live in townhouses. When you live in such an area, the association usually handles the service. Why bother sending them something irrelevant to their needs? All it will do is cause unnecessary unsubscribes.

The unsubscribes will hurt you in two ways:

- 1) Now that person won’t get your more relevant message about spring window cleaning.
- 2) Unsubscribes affect the deliverability rate of your e-mails. The more you get, the more it will hurt your account.

This is just one example, of course. But always think about it on this level: You want to deliver timely, relevant messages to the right people. It will help keep your open rates high and your unsubscribe rates low.

Forms

MailChimp allows you to tie the contact form on your website to

a particular list. It will even give you nice widgets and links for your site to prompt people to sign up for your list.

Ongoing Collection

You want to design a clear-cut and automated way to move contacts into your system and to the right list.

You can do this by putting the chore in your marketing calendar. Use it to remind yourself to spend a few minutes on it each month. At least once a month, export data from your CRM, and import into MailChimp. That's a simple, clean way to do it, but it's not automated, it's labor intensive, and it's another thing you need to remember to do each month or week.

Take a look at a program called Zapier. This is an ingenious piece of software that's free for up to one hundred zaps a month. It helps you automate the flow of data around the Internet. You can set it up so people are automatically added to different lists. Different actions control which lists the people are assigned to.

For example, the service has a trigger that will add people to certain lists by putting a contact into a Google Sheet. There's another one that will add an e-mail to a list by tagging it a specific way in Gmail. Check it out: they offer all sorts of free ways to automate the flow of data into your MailChimp account.

Plan ahead

How are you going to continue to add people to your lists? Con-

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sider giving away something—a report, a coupon, or whatever. Have a mechanism on your site to collect e-mail addresses and auto reply with something to the customer. It gets you their e-mail, and it gets you into their in-box. Always continue building your database of prospective and existing customers. Take some time to brainstorm a list of different ways you can get subscribers.

Design Your E-mail

Creating your first e-mail is easy, even if you don't have a great sense of design or the skills.

Step 1) To get started, open your MailChimp account, click “Campaigns,” and create the campaign.

Step 2) Choose “Regular Campaign” or “Plain Text Campaign.” Ignore the other options for now.

Should you send a plain text campaign or a regular campaign? What's the difference? A plain text campaign is just plain, standard words. It looks like any regular e-mail you would fire off or receive. A regular campaign is an HTML image-based e-mail.

For your first e-mail, I would consider sending a plain text campaign. They are simple and easy to put together, and it will help ensure that the process doesn't overwhelm you.

Step 3) Select the list you're going to send to.

Step 4) Name your campaign, and choose a subject line.

Step 5) Pick a template. MailChimp comes with twenty-three predefined templates to choose from: single column, double column, etc.

Step 6) Enter your content and images, if you have any. It's all drag and drop; you can paste in whatever you like.

Step 7) Review your message. Send yourself a test e-mail, and review what it looks like on a couple of different platforms.

Review it in a browser on your desktop, and review it on your phone. Make sure that it looks good in either format. Test to be sure all the links and images you entered click to the right location. Have a friend or coworker look it over; another set of eyes can be helpful. And don't forget to check all the spelling and grammar.

Any e-mail program you use will have a built-in spell-checker, but the spell-checker usually doesn't do so hot with grammar. Give it a careful review. I always try to run everything I write through a free software program called Grammarly. Give it a try: grammarly.com.

Step 8) Schedule or send. At this point, you have designed, tested, and reviewed the e-mail. You can schedule it to send automatically at some set time in the future, or you can hit "Send" and ship it off right away. I would recommend scheduling it.

If you care to take this even further, give thought to the ideal send time. With the "Schedule" feature, you can have it go out anytime you want. So, when is the best time of day? It's hard to say for sure, but you can conduct experiments to find out.

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My preference is Sunday around 5:30 p.m. The theory is that customers are home, mentally getting ready for and planning their week and preparing to-do lists. I also like Mondays between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.; the same theory applies. Test and experiment for yourself. MailChimp has all the features you need to conduct experiments, with no extra cost to you.

Best Practices

Personalize! When writing your e-mails, speak to the recipients as personally as possible. Use their name as if you are having a conversation with them.

Send only useful stuff. If the information you are sending isn't useful and doesn't serve a direct purpose, don't send it. Does it drive them to complete a transaction or pass across a useful piece of information? If not, don't send it. Don't waste their time or yours.

Keep it short. Imagine everyone who reads your e-mail is going to read it on a smartphone. Get your message across in the clearest, most concise way possible.

Treat them extra special. Offer new promos and your best offers to the people who open and interact with your e-mails the most. Reward them for faithfully opening your content and using your service.

Put a lot of thought into your subject lines. This is the most important element of your e-mail campaign. After all, if you don't compel people with a great reason to open the e-mail, it will

never get read.

Avoid words that people perceive as spam: *free*, *gift*, etc. My highest open rate was on an e-mail with the subject line saying, “I’m Sorry.” I would never have guessed it.

Test, Tweak, Measure

One of the coolest things about MailChimp is the data and the granular level you can get to with it. You can review endless statistics and numbers. It allows you to play with the data and learn more about your customers. Use the data it provides to improve future campaigns.

A “Reports” tab gives you a broad overview of your recent campaigns. You can drill into any individual campaign or review them all at once. It’s not mandatory to review the data, but I promise it will help. At the least, get in there a couple of days after a campaign goes out to review the results. Put that on your marketing calendar!

The four essential data pieces you should review are as follows:

- 1) Opens. How many people opened the e-mail? Dig into the “Open Rate” report to see who opened it. Take it a step further and sort by the number of opens. Did one of your clients open your e-mail more than a few times? They might be right on the fence of another purchase with you. Maybe you can reach out to them to see if they need help. That could push them over the edge to schedule another appointment.

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2) Clicks. How many people clicked a link within the e-mail? Did someone click it way more than average? You know what to do.

3) Unsubscribes. These are the people who didn't like your message and chose to opt out of receiving future e-mails.

4) Bounced. The e-mail never made it to the recipient. The address could no longer be in use and shut down. Or it could be full and is no longer accepting new e-mails.

With these four metrics, you're only looking for patterns. Did one e-mail have a higher unsubscribe rate than normal? That might be worth looking into. Was it something you said?

Did one e-mail receive a much-greater open rate than the others? Hmm. What did you say in that subject line to get more people to open it? These four items are the bare minimum you should be reviewing on a regular basis.

Go deeper if you choose!

Many more advanced features are worth reviewing. If you're inclined to learn more and take it further, the MailChimp website and blog are great places to start.

If it is worth e-mailing your customers, it is also worth reviewing the reports. But most importantly, take action on what you're seeing in there. Use the data it presents to you to improve future campaigns.

No Spam

Don't spam; it's bad. This should go without saying, but I'm going to say it anyway. Do not spam people. If they unsubscribe, leave them unsubscribed. They can always resubscribe if they choose.

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CHAPTER 8: SOCIAL MEDIA

Should you have social media profiles?

Yes, even if you don't intend to use them right away. At the least, reserve your company's name on them to take control of your identity.

Likely, most of your customers and prospective customers are on the various platforms. Try to get in there with them when you can. Form relationships, add value, and protect your brand.

The Value of Social Media

My thoughts on the value of social media go back and forth. Sometimes I see the value, but I'm often left wondering because the value isn't measurable. It's hard to tell if it's working!

It's not like a direct mail piece with a call to action, where you can immediately gauge the value. But because it's free, I find it worthy of a little exploration.

The real value of social media is it levels the playing field. You can get in there and compete against your biggest competitor. They have no way of outspending you with money. Those that form the tightest relationships with their customers and biggest fans, win.

It gives you the ability to do customer service publicly. If there is ever a complaint or problem, you can respond to it in almost real time. Every complaint is an opportunity for a sale. How you

handle complaints when they arise will either get you more work or cost you quite a bit.

It can be an excellent human resource department, as well. We found some of our best hires through public recommendations on social media.

Social Media Best Practices

- 1) Be cool
- 2) Be friendly
- 3) Be helpful
- 4) Don't spam

It's as simple as that.

Focus

Determine which networks to focus on.

You have so many choices. I recommend you try to claim your name on as many of them as you reasonably can. Lock them down, and then decide where to focus your time. I'd say share and take part in no more than four.

As of this writing, the top-ten social media networks in the United States, in order, are as follows:

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1) Facebook

2) YouTube

3) Twitter

4) Reddit

5) Pinterest

6) Tumbler

7) LinkedIn

8) Instagram

9) Yahoo Answers

10) Google+

So, where is the best place for you to spend your valuable time? Where are your customers most likely to be?

If I could pick only four, here is where and why I would spend my energy:

Facebook. Facebook is huge. Everyone is on it, and there are many opportunities to engage. It's a must-have.

LinkedIn. Although this won't help you from the residential standpoint we are focusing on in this book, I'm going to assume your company also does some commercial and business-to-busi-

ness work. Having an active LinkedIn account and profile is a must-have for pushing this type of work.

Instagram. Although smaller than other popular networks, it's growing fast. It's popular with the younger demographic, and it's showing no signs of slowing down.

Google+. Like Instagram, it's not one of the most popular networks, and there are more men than women there. But it is tied to the biggest search engine there is. As of this writing, Google has 78% of the US search results' share. And Google+ is actively tied to SERP position ranking. It only makes sense for you to have a presence there.

These next two would be my runners-up:

Twitter. It's great for conversation, and connecting with your potential customers is a piece of cake.

Pinterest. Review a demographic report of Pinterest users, and you will see that your target market is there. It's mostly women, and reports show they have disposable income.

Getting the Right URLs

Make the names that you register coincide with the name of your company. Also, try to get vanity URLs if they are available to you. Get your company's name before someone else does.

If your name is already taken across the major networks, which it likely is, consider another version of your name. For example,

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if I couldn't get the name or URL at the top for social networks for spartawindowcleaning.com, I would try to find another name variation that I could use consistently across them:

- 1) northjerseywindowcleaning.com
- 2) sussexcountywindowcleaning.com
- 3) spartwc.com

It's important that you get a consistent name. Consider using the free web tool knowem.com. This service will check the availability of a name across hundreds of social platforms.

What Should You Talk About?

What content should you be sharing and talking about?

Share content both unique and curated. This could be a blog post from your website or a link to a relevant, interesting article. It should be something your ideal customer would show interest in and find useful or valuable, such as tips or articles on home improvement.

Share occasional promotional material, specials, coupons, and offers. Don't go crazy here; keep it to a minimum. Offer things such as company information, hours of operation, holiday hours, general info, and behind-the-scenes stuff. Include interesting stuff about the people and stories behind your brand.

If you're hiring, share job postings here. Make the information

sound unique and interesting.

Join a conversation. Don't use social media only to broadcast a message. Get in there and mix it up with your audience. Reply to questions and leave comments. Be available. Show you're human.

Social Media Calendar

Keep a social media calendar independent of your marketing calendar. I recommend using a separate tab within your marketing calendar spreadsheet.



Sheet - Marketing Calendar Social Media

Keep it basic and simple. Try to lay out an ongoing inspirational list of ideas and possible topics. Preschedule or plan a month's worth of updates and posts.

Facebook Page

When it comes to your web presence, having a Facebook page is second in importance only to your website.

At the least, claim your page. Get a custom URL, and get your contact info up. Your page will rank almost by default for when someone searches your company name online.

Take it a step further from claiming the page and start making some posts happen. There is a handy, built-in post scheduler.

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You can sit down and craft a whole bunch of posts at once, set them, and forget about them.

The next step is to start getting some likes. This will help your posts gain some visibility. The people you want to see your posts first have to like your page.

Warning: Not all your posts will show to all the people who like your page. Facebook has changed their algorithm recently. Your posts now have almost no visibility to your fans. A recent study showed that only 2.6% of a brand's posts will be visible to its fans who liked its page.

On the surface, that would make it seem almost useless to bother posting there. But I still believe it to be important. The activity there does send off social ranking signals to the search engines. So, although you might not see direct results from your page, things are happening. Behind the scenes, the activity on your page is affecting your ranking with Google.

Even if you don't use or like Facebook, you should have a presence. Go here to start: facebook.com/business.

You can have a page up and running in a few minutes. Populate it with pictures and informative posts. Put it into your ongoing content-marketing schedule, and be sure to push reviews at it. Encourage customers to like the page and leave reviews.

I often see window cleaners online asking their friends to like their page. It drives me crazy; please don't do this. You want your prospective clients to see your posts, not other window cleaners.

Do not encourage people who are not your customers or not in your target market to like your page. The whole point of getting likes is to get your updates into your prospective clients' news feed or to show people who like your page targeted pay-per-click (PPC) ads. If you load up your page with likes from window cleaning friends, you are lessening the impact of the two points.

Facebook Groups

Groups are *huge*. They are so popular now, and Facebook has groups for everything. Go to Facebook and type your town's name into the search window. See what comes up. I can almost guarantee your town has a group.

See what types of groups are out there for your top-ten towns. Can you narrow them down further? Are there subgroups in your town for just neighborhoods? Can you join any of them? If so, great. Is there a way you can add value to the group or join the conversation?

Moderate a Community Group

Can't find a group for one of your best towns? Consider creating one. It could be a little weird if you don't live there, but there may be ways you can pull it off. Share relevant local news, sports, and happenings. Be helpful and informative, but take caution not to be spammy.

Warning: Do not broadcast any unsolicited sales messages into a group, especially one you do not own. The perception will not

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be good, especially if it's off topic. If you do own the group, though, there is no problem whatsoever. You can trickle in the occasional blatant sales message or promotion. Just keep it as relevant as possible.

Maybe consider starting your own Facebook group or perhaps even five of them. Pick your top-five neighborhoods that you work in, and see if they have a dedicated group going. If not, consider creating and administering one. You could invite customers you know who live in those neighborhoods. Then, run occasional promos and offers into it. Consider it your fee for creating and running the group.

Although I haven't tried this myself, I would strongly consider it. There is no downside to experimenting. It's completely free to create a Facebook group; the only investment is your time. Treat it as you would your e-mail marketing. Pump out the occasional offer mixed in with helpful content. Don't spam people, and be valuable.

Here is exactly how I would do this (if I were going to try it):

Create groups for my top-five neighborhoods, such as "Glen Harbor—Friends" or something similar.

- 1) Invite or add some people I know who live in that neighborhood.
- 2) Give them an incentive to invite their other friends.
- 3) Be the admin of the group, and maintain complete control over who enters.

4) Encourage conversation.

Mix in the occasional advertisement or offer helpful advice.

Give it a try; it might make a nice winter project. To create a group, go to facebook.com/groups and click the “+Create Group” button.

Other than Facebook

Register an account for your company at these places. At the least, lock your account name down:

Twitter, Google+, Instagram

Automate Some of It

With social media, it's great to get in there, be personal, and have a conversation. But you have to sort through a lot of noise. Consider using a piece of software to manage all your accounts and updates. I recommend you check out hootsuite.com and buffer.com. They each have both free and paid account options.

Hootsuite allows you to track all your social media channels and preschedule posts. Buffer will only preschedule your posts.

Although Buffer has a more limited feature set, it is a better-fitting product for me. I find it to be better at sharing stuff, and it keeps me connected because I have to log in to each account.

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The whole trick with automating this stuff is doing so without it appearing automated. If you send out automated content and messages only, they will all be totally ignored.

It's easy to see what is automated and what is not. Put blocks of content on autopilot, but jump into the mix as well to interact. If you sprinkle real human contact around the prescheduled blocks, nobody will know. Keep it real!

Don't Obsess

Set it up in advance, and move on. Have @ replies all forwarded to your e-mail. The number-one mistake I see people make with social media is obsessing. They completely obsess and check in fifty times a day. Doing that will burn a tremendous amount of time from your life. It will quickly kill your progress on other areas of your work. Set it up, put in your automation, and then preschedule fifteen to twenty minutes a day max to get in there and interact—that is, unless you're getting a significant chunk of your business, say 20% or more, from social media. There's no reason to be there any longer than that per day. Jump in, have a few conversations, respond to any direct messages, and get out. Move on.

Rented Land

Don't forget, you are building on rented property. Before you put any time and energy into social media, please know that you have no ownership of the content. Yes, you may have created it. But once it's posted, it becomes their property.

This is one my biggest beefs with social media. You're creating a lot of good stuff on someone else's property. You have no real control over the content you spend endless amounts of time producing and pumping out.

When possible, build on “owned land” and share out from there.

Translation: Write about it and post it on your company's blog first. From there, share it wherever you like. This way, you are in direct control and possession of all your material.

Although it's not likely, you never know how the networks' terms of service may change in the future. Or maybe they will have an algorithm change, as has taken place with Facebook. We talked earlier about how page posts now show to only 2.6% of followers. It wasn't always like that. In the past, many brands built out their whole businesses according to Facebook's original page policies. When Facebook turned the traffic off overnight, you better believe it crippled quite a few businesses.

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CHAPTER 9: REVIEWS

You have tons of satisfied customers, right? I know you do, and I know you have been collecting reviews from them all along, right?

Review Society

Like you, I purchase quite a few items online, sight unseen. I buy a lot of audiobooks, apps, and other household items from Amazon and other places. Instinctively, I read the reviews first and check them all out to see what people have to say.

If a product doesn't have at least a couple of reviews, I have to say, I am a little hesitant to buy. I have come to expect them, and your prospective customers have, as well.

When it comes time to buy, consumers are now less swayed by advertisements. Reviews and peer comments have more influence than ever. People are more likely to make a purchase if they see friends expressing satisfaction.

When making a purchase, a potential customer subconsciously references three things:

- 1) Prior beliefs or knowledge. Customers recall experiences or previous interactions with the company or companies like it. When purchasing a service like ours, customers don't have much to go on, unless, of course, they have used a similar company in the past.

- 2) Information from marketers, which consists of things learned from advertisements and marketing messages. Hopefully, this came from you, and you have done a proper job of pitching your company to the customers.
- 3) Online reviews. This dimension is a recent development, but its popularity is growing fast. And it's especially relevant with services like ours: window cleaning, pressure washing, home services. It's also relevant for infrequent purchases with high ticket prices. People don't know whom to choose, so they turn to online reviews.

Bake It In

This is so important that it should transcend your marketing calendar. If you make it part of your everyday process, you are way more likely to rack up reviews. If you want more, you have to put planned, regular actions in place. Making it part of your follow-up process is a great place to start.

Think about how you can get more reviews published to your home base and other review sites. First, you should be getting reviews pushed to your site. Later, we will talk about how you can use thank you cards and follow-up cards to collect reviews. In one year, I was able to drive five hundred high-quality, five-star reviews to my site. This was all done by doing a great job and sending out a "Thank You Review Card."



PSD - Thank You Review Our Services Leave Behind

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Be Reviewable

Always do the best job imaginable. Make sure everything comes out perfect, and go the extra mile. Wow customers in some way.

Make it painless for them to leave reviews. Do you have a system set up to capture reviews and positive comments on every job site? Make it easy for the customer to leave you feedback in all forms, including verbally, on paper, and online.

Start with requests for verbal feedback. Follow up with a written request with a survey card. Then, put the best ones online.

Control the Conversation

Consider it proactive online reputation management. I love almost everything about online reviews. But one element to them doesn't sit well with me: customers sometimes use them as a weapon when they don't get their way.

The problem occurs when the customer is unreasonable or when the company's expectations don't align with the consumer's.

I believe this has led to a whole-new crop of customers or scam artists. They call around and have services down at their house with no intention of paying. They claim dissatisfaction and threaten a poor online review to get a free service. I know that sounds alarmist, but I've experienced it, and they are out there.

The best thing you can do to combat this and minimize the effect is to stack the deck. Have plenty of online reviews to skew

the numbers in your favor.

It is crucial for you to control the conversation and have lots of positive reviews lined up. That phony one-star review won't seem so bad if one hundred five-star reviews are surrounding it. Control the online conversation whenever possible by having these positive reviews in place.

Internal Capturing

Here are a couple of ways you can request feedback and reviews from your customers and clients:

- 1) On-site conversation: The job is complete. You ask them how everything looks, and they lay a great comment on you. Boom, the door is open. "Can I quote you on that?"
- 2) On the follow-up call: Same technique as on-site conversation.
- 3) Postcard: Your follow-up job-satisfaction card has a survey on it. Have a place for extra comments. I promise you it will help cultivate some gems.
- 4) E-mail: You can use an e-mail follow-up instead of a post-card. I wouldn't recommend it because you'll get way fewer responses. But you could do it this way, and it will likely generate some good comments.
- 5) Online form: Same as e-mail but more of a predesigned form. You can make a professional one with Google Forms free of

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charge. It will list all the responses for you in a spreadsheet. This is a decent solution.

6) A service: Review-collection and review-aggregation services are cropping up all over the place. I've seen these do a variety of different things, from review solicitation and collection to syndication to various social media platforms.

Tips:

Make sure your reviews have customers' names and towns. Without them, the reviews seem fake as all get-out.

Keep them all in one place. A spreadsheet makes sense, especially a shared one with a collection form attached to it. You want to be able to draw on them at any time. Tie a review to the customer by name, e-mail, address, phone number, and whatever other data you have on them. This, of course, is your private database, so keep whatever identifying information you can.

Always get permission to use them.

One quick warning: If you come across a positive review for your company or service on another website, don't touch it. That review is property of that site, even though the review is about you. That's kind of weird, but it's true. If you copy and paste it, you are infringing on the intellectual property of the person who wrote it. Don't copy it, and make it a point to play with only the ones for which you have full permission to do so.

Broadcasting and Sharing—Your Website

Your prospective customers have come to expect reviews. Have them on your site, or risk people moving on to a competitor's site that does have them. WordPress has many free widgets that you can use to assist with this. They make it simple to collect and embed reviews and testimonials on your site. Search "Plugins" on wordpress.org for an exhaustive list.

Check out one called "Testimonials Widget." I have been using it for years. It allows you to publish all your collected reviews on the relevant pages of your website. It rotates them around and categorizes them by different tags or services. It even lets you embed them in any pages, headers, or side columns that you choose. The tagging-and-categorization feature is powerful. It allows you to show the right review on the right page. Plus, you're the one who is controlling what reviews make it to your website. You can put up only the ones that deliver the message you want to deliver.

Get Relevant

Let's say you have a page on your site about gutter cleaning. It would make sense to show reviews related only to gutter cleaning services on that page. Do this same process with every service you offer. Pair up the content of any page with the right type of collected review. It's powerful and, of course, completely free.

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Broadcasting and Sharing—Social Media

It's great to have plenty of reviews on your website, but take it a step further and pump them into the public domain. Once you have a steady stream of new reviews coming in, start using them to your advantage. These make for great blog content and even better social media fodder. You can send these out on a regular basis to your social media feeds, and, of course, those should link back to your site.

Internet Review Sites

Be aware of the importance of reviews and proactive online reputation management. Also, it's best to have reviews on a few other sites that are not under your direct control. Aside from giving the reviews more credibility, think of it as insurance. The day will come when you get a bad review on one of these sites. If you're out there making a big impact on your market, it's going to happen. Make sure you are prepared for it.

Diversify your review portfolio. Have reviews on your site, and have them on third-party sites. Make it a priority; you will thank me later. Control your online destiny by purposefully driving quality reviews on an ongoing basis. Send your happiest, most thrilled clients toward it. Below, I go in depth on a few of the more popular review sites. These are places I think you should be proactive and start assembling positive reviews. You will find them listed in no particular order.

Yelp

People go to Yelp to complain. Stack the quality reviews here while you can. Restaurants are the primary users of Yelp, but it's also popular for home-service companies.

I had a fake negative Yelp review that I estimate cost me \$50,000 in damage over a year. It was completely fake and in one of our best areas. I attempted everything under the sun to get it removed. I called Yelp, I wrote Yelp, and I piled dozens of great reviews on top of it. Eventually, I gave in to the extortion and paid the customer to take it down. If this hadn't been my first review there and I'd had an already-established base of reviews there, it would have had almost no impact on me. But it was my first, and it hurt.

Yelp has recently come under fire for being a pay-to-play model. But if you pay to advertise, you have better control over pushing down negative reviews.

Google My Business

Your Google Business Page is the best place to promote reviews, in my opinion. They show up in search results, and they have the ability to affect where your site shows up in the rankings. If I could pick only one place to strive for more reviews, this is where it would be.

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Angie's List

Popular across most of the United States with housewives and homemakers, this is a higher-end review-site platform. I say that because there is a paid membership needed to post and review. The reviews tend to be higher quality and better thought out. You usually won't find the wild, fly-by-night complaints that you will on the other sites.

Please note they also offer an enhanced-listing paid-advertising option. I have used this with some success. We stopped using it because of a diminishing return on investment.

Facebook

Yep, Facebook does reviews. If you look at the left-hand side of your page, it's called "Facebook Reviews." Anyone with a Facebook account can go there, leave you a review, and grade you on a scale of one to five stars.

Automate It

I have experimented with a couple of services that help you take control of the review process. One of them was OK, and I still have it set up. I don't use it much because it's not great on mobile devices, and I haven't been totally sold on it. I had used the other for about a year, and then they went out of business. (I'm glad I kept a backup of the reviews.)

I recently came across a new one that I have a great feeling

about. I have been using it for the past couple of months, and it does everything I need it to and more.

It's called NiceWork; you can check it out at Hatchspot.com/nicework. This is a cool piece of software. First, it connects to all your social media profiles, including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Then, it connects to all your review pages on various services across the Internet. It links to Google+, Facebook, City-search, Yelp, Yellow Pages, and a few more.

It lets you add reviews while you're on the job, publish those reviews to your website and social networks, and send beautiful invites to your customers. You can even add photos right from the job, and NiceWork will use those photos to help motivate your customers to leave a review. Check it out for yourself; it might be just the tool you've been looking for to help automate the whole process.

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CHAPTER 10: PAID TRAFFIC

Paid Traffic Intro

Once your website is set up and optimized for conversions, consider using paid traffic. Optimization must come first, though. If it isn't set up right, tested, and tweaked, you are going to lose a lot of money. There is nothing worse than sending paid traffic toward a crappy, ineffective website. It's a total waste of time. Once your website is closing deals and getting you leads, consider spending some money.

PPC = Pay Per Click

Google pioneered this technology and made it available to the masses. Over the years, it has proved to be a cost-effective way to gain website visitors. It allows you to test on a small scale the different campaigns and offers.

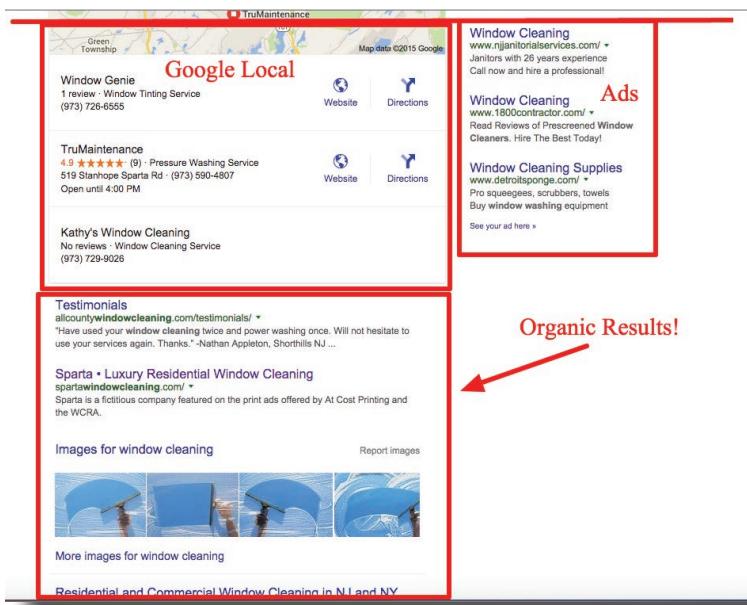
The neat thing about PPC is you can set your budget and run small campaigns. This allows you to test an idea and refine it for a small amount of money. If it proves successful, you can crank it up and increase traffic with a greater spend. The two main players in the game are Google and Facebook. The concept is the same, but they work in different ways.

With Google, you show ads to prospective customers according to search terms they enter. With Facebook, you show ads according to location, demographics, and interests. And, of course, with both of them, there is the retargeting that we talked about before. These PPC ads get run and managed through the same

retargeting platform interface.

Google

First, let's talk about "the fold." See my image here? Note the red line at the bottom. That's called the fold. It's what a web visitor sees in just one section of their computer screen without scrolling down.



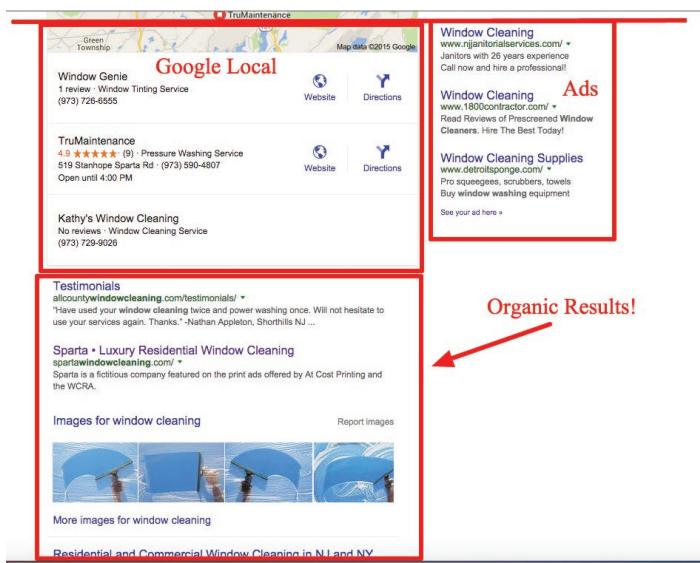
What do you notice? Today in 2016, it's impossible to show up above the fold in any Google search result without paying. Everything you see above the fold is a paid ad. That's crazy when you think about it, but it is what it is. If you want to show up at the top, you're going to have to pay. Here is where you can get

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started if you're interested.

google.com/ads

Above the fold is all ads. Now, let's take a look below the fold on a search for "Window Cleaning." There are more things for your potential customer to weed through.



Of course, the ads continue down the right side. Underneath the main ads, you have your Google My Business listing. Remember when I was telling you how important it is to get one of those? Google will show those before it gets anywhere near the organic listings. Once you get through the ads and the local listings, you have your organic results.

I'm happy to see my sites are still on top of the local listings. :)

That should give you a good overview of what Google PPC ads are and why they are important. It's a snap to get set up; you can be up and running in about thirty minutes.

Your toughest decision is going to be what type of words and key phrases to bid on. The whole key to success is not getting your ad in front of the most people; rather, it's getting it in front of the right people.

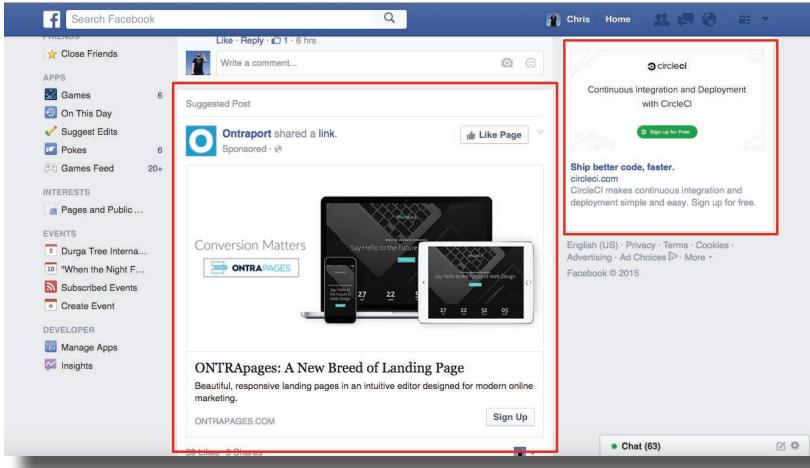
The cool thing about this method is that the traffic is actually from people with a real interest in your service. The downside is that those people who have no knowledge of you or your company are also likely to be price shopping. They just know they want clean windows at the best price.

Facebook

Facebook has taken the PPC game to a whole-new level. Everyone is on it all the time. Look around when you see someone's face buried in their phone. They are on Facebook, I guarantee it. I read a study that said people on average check in fourteen times a day. They spend thirty minutes a day on average looking at Facebook on their phone. That's shocking from a societal perspective. I'm not a fan of Facebook, and I try to limit my time on it to one or two daily check-ins for business purposes. My opinion aside, this is great news for marketers.

Here are the two main ad locations you will see. There are others, but I have had the best luck with these.

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When we were talking about Google PPC, it was about what a prospective customer is searching for. With Facebook, it's more than a search. Yep, you can manage that pixel tracking we talked about earlier through here. But you can also do a lot more.

For example, I could show an ad right now to this person:

Female, married, thirty-two years old, speaks French, likes to go on cruises.

That's pretty niche, when you think about it. You couldn't get more specific if you tried. That's how powerful it is. You could also set it up to show ads only to people who have liked your business page.

You can experiment with this and show targeted ads to prospective customers for just \$5 a day. You can and should start that small.

If you use PPC, it is best to send people to a targeted landing page on your website as opposed to the main page.

This is just another thing you can do to personalize the experience and that will cause all your marketing efforts to have a greater impact.

Lead Sites

You may wish to look at some pay-for lead sites. Here is how they work:

You register an account and agree to pay X for a window cleaning lead. They then advertise and optimize their websites for all sorts of home services.

If it's a service that this company performed at a home, they will optimize for it and collect leads. They will then sell these leads to you and your competitors. When a lead comes in, they distribute it to you and any of your other competitors who opt in. At this point, they will charge your credit card on file for the agreed-upon lead price.

Use caution with these. Experiment with one or two of them, and gauge the quality of leads you receive. Remember, you are paying for leads whether you land the job or not.

I have used ServiceMagic (now HomeAdvisor) with decent results. We had both good and bad years with them. We found the key to success in using their service was to respond to the customer as fast as possible. When one of these leads came in,

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we dropped everything and reached out to them. You figure the leads are going to go to you and your competitors at the same time, so whoever gets to them first, wins.

Warning: This method attracts the price shoppers. Although we used ServiceMagic for a few years with success, we ended up dropping them because the quality of leads worsened with every passing year. It got to the point where blatantly fake ones were coming across. ServiceMagic made it tough to reverse the charge of a bad lead. After the time invested in chasing down a refund for a fake lead outweighed the good leads, we were out!

Here are a few examples of these types of sites:

- HomeAdvisor—formerly ServiceMagic
- Thumbtack
- Porch

The reports and reviews on these sites are mixed. Do a search for their name on windowcleaningresource.com. You will see that the reviews run fifty-fifty. Some people are having great luck with them, whereas other people report an unsatisfactory experience. It could come down to your area. At the least, they are worth investigating and doing your own research and experimentation.

CHAPTER 11: TRANSACTIONAL PAPERWORK

Paid Traffic Intro

The transactional paperwork you use for the back and forth with your customer is a great place to market your services continually. Use any transaction or interaction with a customer as an opportunity to do so. It sounds obnoxious to say, but it can be done in a very classy way. Here are a few pieces of transactional-type documents you should have in your business, as well as a few ways you can use these to continue your marketing efforts.

Don't forget what we said about branding. These should deliver the same consistent message as do the other components of your business.

Prospective Cards

These things are awesome; get a thousand of them printed up. Anytime a potential customer calls for an estimate or enquires through e-mail or your website and does *not* schedule an appointment, fire them off one of these.

Five reasons to use Sparta Window Cleaning:

- 1) Expertise—Over one million windows cleaned. We are the experts!
- 2) Fully insured for your protection—Up to \$1 million.

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- 3) Convenience—Appointments are available six days a week to fit the needs of your schedule.
- 4) Speed—Fast, easy scheduling and job completion.
- 5) Guaranteed—Streak-free windows guaranteed. If it's wrong, we will make it right, or you don't pay a dime.

You can deliver a few types of messages on prospective cards, but I prefer to send something like this:



PSD - Postcard 4 x 6 Prospective

Estimate Sheets

For residential services, I have no interest in personal on-site estimates. I believe they should all be done over the phone when-

11 • Transactional Paperwork

ever possible. (That's a story for another book, though.) If you absolutely must do an in-person estimate (and you're going to have to), you should have an estimate sheet of some sort.

SPARTA
WINDOW CLEANING

HOME INSPECTION SERVICE ESTIMATE
3680 RT 94, Hamburg, NJ 07462
spartawindowcleaning.com
862-266-0677

• Window Cleaning
• Gutter Cleaning
• Scratch Removal
• Roof Washing
• House Washing
• Concrete Cleaning

clean it up!

Inspection Items	INSPECTED AND OKAY AT THIS TIME			FUTURE ATTENTION	IMMEDIATE ATTENTION
	OK	Soon	Immediate		
1 Window Cleaning In and out. + Tracks sills and screens.				\$	
2 Window cleaning outside only.				\$	
3 Soft Wash siding.				\$	
4 Full interior gutter debris clean out.				\$	
5 Full exterior gutter whitening.				\$	
6 Soft Wash Roof cleaning.				\$	
7 Deck cleaning restoration.				\$	
8 Fence restoration.				\$	
9 Concrete walkway cleaning.				\$	
10 Paver and walkway cleaning & sealing.				\$	
11 Scratch removal glass surface.				\$	
12 Chandelier cleaning & polishing.				\$	

Comments: _____

Call Me To Schedule?
Yes
No

Signature: _____



PSD Estimate Sheet Inspection

You'll see the same branding continues, and I use it as an upsell for the other services we perform.

A customer may have called just for a window cleaning estimate, but there's no reason while we are there we can't at least give them prices for the other services we provide. Some of the very best and biggest jobs we have scored over the years came from

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customers who started enquiring about other services.

You should view it as your duty and obligation to inform the customer of the other ways in which your company can assist them, especially if you went all the way out to their property for an in-person estimate.

Job Tickets/Invoices

You may have told the customer on the phone about the other services you offer when they originally booked their appointment, and they may not have heard you. Or they may be so thrilled with how good the windows looked that they are willing to give your company a try on some other services. Use your invoice to remind them once again of all the great ways your company can help them.

Your invoice should not only remind them of what else you can do but also give them a price for those services. Point out other ways in which you can help them. There is no easier time to sell them than when they are thrilled to death over the work you just performed.

It can be as simple as this:

11 • Transactional Paperwork

SPARTA
WINDOW CLEANING

3680 RT 94, Hamburg, NJ 07462
spartawindowcleaning.com
862-266-0677

WORK ORDER #	DATE			
CUSTOMER #				
NAME				
ADDRESS				
CITY/STATE	ZIP			
DESCRIPTION OF TASKS		QUANTITY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
Payment Received: <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Check # _____		SUB TOTAL		
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card # _____ STATE SALES TAX AMOUNTS: NY-0% NJ-7% RC-8.375% PA-6% SC-8%		SALES TAX		
Expires _____		TOTAL		
SUPERVISOR TECH		DEPOSIT		
TECH		AMOUNT DUE		
COMMENTS _____				
I understand that full payment in the amount of _____ is due upon satisfactory completion of the above services.				
Customer Signature _____ Date _____				
Refer A Friend and Get \$25 off your next service		SUPERVISOR CHECK LIST Indicate Satisfactory Completion		
<input type="checkbox"/> Streak Free Windows <input type="checkbox"/> Sills <input type="checkbox"/> Tracks <input type="checkbox"/> Screens <input type="checkbox"/> Job Site Clean and Neat <input type="checkbox"/> Moved Items Restored to Location		CUSTOMER CHECK LIST Indicate Satisfactory Completion		
Supervisor Signature _____ Date _____ Print Supervisor Name _____		Customer Signature _____ Date _____ Print Customer Name _____		



PSD - Work Invoice

Notice how I not only mentioned the other services we offered but also gave the prices for them? Start doing this now. There is no reason not to.

Brochures of Other Services

Brochures are handy. You don't need one right away, but get some when you can afford them. Think of it as a step beyond a business card, a place where you can lay out all your services that you offer, as well as all the ways in which these services can

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assist the customer. You can also talk a tiny bit about yourself and your company, but make sure you do it in a way that it's not about you. It's about the customer.

You can handle the distribution of the brochures in the same way as business cards and flyers. You can leave them or pin them up in all the same types of places. You can also leave them behind after completion of a job or with a customer after an in-person estimate.

You can even use brochures as a complete replacement for business cards. Anytime someone asks you for a card, give them one of these instead. It's way more impressive.

I used one like this for many years; it was a great marketing-and-sales tool.



PSD - Sparta WC Trifold Brochure

Follow-up Cards

These are my favorite! They can serve so many purposes and at the same time continue to deliver the same consistent marketing message.

On the surface, a follow-up card is intended to gather feedback about how the job went and was completed.

You should be doing a follow-up call as well. But in the follow-up card, a customer will tell you things that they wouldn't want to say to your face or over the phone. This is particularly important if you have employees or multiple crews out there doing the work. You want to know how your people are performing and how satisfied your customers are at the same time.

Here is how you should use follow-up cards.

The day after you complete the job, you close out the customer's job ticket and process their payment. The phone call you place might sound something like this:

"Hi, Miss Smith. I just wanted to drop you a quick line to thank you for the appointment yesterday and to confirm that everything on-site turned out great. Oh, it did? I'm so happy to hear that. If you happen to have any friends or neighbors who you think could take advantage of our service, we would really appreciate a recommendation. As a small family company, we get the majority of our business from word of mouth. Thanks so much, and have a great day."

Even though Miss Smith told you everything on-site turned out

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great, you're still going to want to send her a follow-up card in the mail.

It should cover these four topics:

- 1) A thank you: Thank them again for choosing you.
- 2) A brief survey: The customer will likely be more honest.
- 3) Ask for a referral again.
- 4) Encourage them to come back and schedule again for a discount. Here is what ours looked like:



PSD - Thank You Review Our Services Leave Behind

Mail it in an envelope. Inside are a thank you card and a survey card. The survey card is stamped so the customer can send it back to us with ease, and it also has a URL that directs back to

our site if they prefer to do it online. You'll notice we again ask for referrals and also offer the customer a 10% discount if they book another appointment within the next three months.

This will end up costing you about a buck per customer, but I believe it to be massively worth it when you realize all the great things you can accomplish with it. You're thanking the customer, you're reminding them, you're surveying them, you're looking for referrals, you're upselling them, and you're doing quality control. You're enforcing your brand in their mind.

Leave Behind—Review Our Services

This is a piece that we would occasionally leave behind or mail out with our survey cards. At certain times, we were aggressively pursuing online reviews, and these came in handy for prompting the customer to leave us one. It was great because we would list on the paper whatever network we were most interested in receiving a review for. We made it a cinch for them.

Years ago, I got a piece of junk mail from the Nielsen TV ratings company. They asked me to fill out a survey, and they included an actual dollar bill with the survey. When I got that, you better believe I filled out that survey for them. I'm not even sure why. I guess I felt an obligation to after taking their dollar.

When my review-our-service-card idea wasn't getting much traction, I remembered my Nielsen experience and started sending out a buck with each one. All of a sudden, for every five surveys we sent out, one customer would leave us a review on the websites we were requesting. It broke down to a cost of about seven

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bucks per received review, after we accounted for printing, postage, preparation, and the dollar bills. I certainly believe those reviews to have been worth more than seven bucks apiece and a worthwhile marketing expense. If you try this, make sure you don't ask for a good review; ask for just a review. You don't want to imply that you are buying favorable reviews; rather, you want to imply that you are expressing gratitude for the customer's time regardless of the type of review they leave. Obviously, of course, you will send this out only to those people who you know for sure are thrilled with your service.

Leave Behind—Magnets

Here is one of our old magnet designs. It's antiquated today, but the magnets are still out there on people's fridges:



People love magnets. We always left one behind and/or mailed one with a survey. Don't cheap out. If it's thick and will hold seven pieces of paper to the fridge, it's more likely to stay around a lot longer. These things have been on our customers' fridges for over a decade and sometimes transition through several owners.

Thoughts

These are just a few examples of the different types of transactional paperwork you will use that can further reinforce your marketing message. Regardless of what you use, be sure it has a consistent look and feel with the rest of your company. You might get the urge to transition some of this to a digital format, and that's certainly OK. You can deliver a comparable message with your digital communications. Please keep in mind, though, that with people printing less and less these days, the companies that still do it really stand out.

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CHAPTER 12: FLYERS AND DOOR HANGERS

I would venture to say a *huge* portion of service companies get their start in business with the use of a flyer. It's their first advertisement for so many reasons. It's cheap and straightforward, and most people can do it.

Almost anyone can open up a word processor document on their computer and type up and create an ad in minutes. Oh yeah, you can also print that ad in a matter of seconds and then have it distributed to your target audience an hour later. I wouldn't recommend you move that fast, but you can if you want to. And that's why flyers are so popular.

Go to windowcleaningresource.com and enter the word *flyer* or *flier* into the search box. You will see hundreds of pages in the results. Thousands of window cleaners are talking about the creation and distribution of flyers.

Unfortunately, because of this ease of use, flyers are everywhere. Your market, like mine, is completely saturated with flyers and handouts. That doesn't mean it isn't a viable marketing method for you. It just means you will have to do things a certain way to stand out. It's still possible to have great success with flyers.

How I Got My Start

I started with a simple black-and-white flyer jammed into newspaper boxes. A lot of service companies use door hangers. I never used them myself. Here in our area of New Jersey, typical driveways are long, and homes are set back. People in New

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Jersey, you could say, are also not so open to unwelcome visitors walking on their property. But I know it's not like this in all parts of the country, for I hear the success stories.

My business was built on flyers. I had the company doing \$400,000 a year by just passing them out. We didn't make the switch to paid direct mail until we were making that much in gross revenue.

In the United States, mailboxes are off limits; you can't touch them. But when I got started, everyone had a newspaper box next to their mailbox. We built our whole strategy around getting flyers into newspaper boxes. I started driving around and attempting to put out one hundred flyers a day in them. Once I got a little traction, I set a new goal of putting out five hundred flyers a day with the help of my girlfriend. She would drive up to the box, and I would hang out the window and jam a flyer in it. That led to hiring her and her friend for full-time distribution. The goal for them was to attempt to put out five hundred a day without me while I was out cleaning windows with the crews.

I started realizing it would be more affordable and efficient to mail into these areas. Official post office mailings proved to be more cost effective. But when I first started and time was a more available resource than money, using flyers made a lot of sense.

The Testing and Measuring Advantage

One of the real advantages of flyers is the small at-home print runs and the ability to test and tweak copy and design. We talked about testing, measuring, and retesting earlier. Flyers are

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the perfect medium for this. Here's how you can start. Make two similar flyer designs, with one subtle difference between the two.

For example, test the following:

- 1) Two different headlines
- 2) Two different calls to action
- 3) Two different price structures
- 4) Two different pictures

The key is to test only one difference at a time. Print one hundred flyers, and then print one hundred more that are nearly identical. The only difference is the headline. Take your two hundred flyers, shuffle them together, and head out to distribute them all in the same area on the same day. Analyze the results for a week. Which of the two flyers gets the highest response rate? Take that winning headline and move on. Print out a higher quantity—maybe two hundred fifty to five hundred—send them out, and see if you can duplicate the results. When a customer calls, be sure to ask which flyer caused them to call.

Test again! Move on to the next element, take your winning headline, and move on to test the call to action. Use one hundred flyers with one call to action, and use one hundred with another. Rinse and repeat. See what element wins, and keep going. Test and measure four to five different elements on your piece over the course of a month. When you are finished, you are likely to have a higher-than-normal converting flyer on your

12 • Flyers and Door Hangers

hands. It's almost guaranteed to produce better results than its previous iterations.

Flyering is a great way to practice this testing-and-measuring concept. You can print flyers at home, you can make the small changes and tweaks, and you can do it all for almost no cost. It's going to cost you only time, gas, ink, and paper. It's a small investment for the potential return.

Two Different Types of Flyers

You have the standard, full-page, 8.5 x 11 flyer. This can be black and white or full color. If you're printing them at home and just testing the waters, it's fine to have a black-and-white design. In fact, it's the only cost-effective way of doing it at home, although full color does add an element of professionalism. Some of my highest-converting flyers have been simple black-and-white designs.



PSD - SpartaWindow 5 Around BW Flyer

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The following are the essential elements to have and include in the design:

- 1) Headline
- 2) Offer
- 3) Phone number
- 4) Call to action
- 5) Coupon

The other kind of flyer you can use is the community bulletin board type. This is like the first type but with perforated, precut tabs on the bottom, like this:



Have your contact name and number on each tab. Also, make sure you pre-cut the tabs so that they tear off with ease.

These are the type of flyers to distribute around town. Think supermarkets, delis, etc. If done right, this community bulletin board type of flyer can be a tremendous way to get a nice, steady stream of work.



PSD - BW Flier Deli

12 • Flyers and Door Hangers

By “done right,” I mean test in small doses in a few different designs. Over a couple of months, refine to one good design that has proved to convert higher than previous iterations. Then, duplicate in mass!

Hop into Google Maps and Google Sheets to map out a hit list. Generate a list in the spreadsheet of the top one hundred to two hundred fifty places in your service area to post a community flyer. Sort them into a driving route. Then, spend a weekend or have a trusted staff member or friend help you distribute them. Attempt to put out two hundred fifty of them at once, spread out all across your service area.

Note on your marketing calendar to follow the same route back around in a couple of weeks or a month. Take note of the status of your flyer. Are all the tabs taken? Is it completely gone? Has it been untouched? Use this info to decide if you will continue to redistribute to this location.

This method costs almost nothing and can be great rainy-day work when someone has some downtime. Test and measure your results, and tweak where necessary. I used this method for many years and had up to five hundred locations on our distribution list. Someone from the company replenished the flyers and took data on an almost monthly basis. It generated thousands of dollars a year and was a well-worthwhile investment in time. The return on investment was amazing. Flyers work.

Ten Different Legal Locations You Can Leave Your Flyers

Delis, job boards, libraries, grocery stores, post offices, church-

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es, community centers, bakeries, restaurants, pharmacies—you get the idea. You can post flyers in many free places. When you're just getting started, this can be an excellent technique. Print one hundred, and see how many you can put up in a day. Think about places you can put these up where your target or ideal customer will most likely see them. What kind of locations are your ideal customers frequenting? Give it some thought, brainstorm a list, and check the places out.

I didn't put places like laundromats and auto repair shops on the list. Those are not places your target market is likely to frequent. Go into it with that mind-set, and the difference between good and bad places will become clear.

Door Hangers

These things usually are full-color prints with a precut hole in them to stick on to a door handle. As I mentioned, these aren't popular in my area because of the long driveways. But they are popular in other parts of the country, and I can see their appeal in certain situations.

Here is an example:



PSD - Postcard Pardon the Glare Door Hanger

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I don't think it's a good idea to walk on to someone's property to put one of these on their door. But I could see it working well at apartment and condo complexes. Old folks' homes and assisted living facilities work, too. The key is to do it legally and with permission.

Here is one way we have used them with success. A couple of sweet, higher-end, condo-type developments are in our area. We got a good amount of organic work from the communities to begin with, so we decided to accelerate it. We contacted the condo board and offered to do the windows in their office twice a year for free.

We had only two conditions: we got to leave a stack of business cards in the lobby, and we had permission to put door hangers on the units. We had four or five of these deals in regular rotation, and they generated a large amount of work.

I would send three people to the community for the day. One would do the windows while the other two would drive around in the company vehicle. They would place a door hanger on every home unit of the community. By the time they were back for the day, we had usually booked more than enough work to cover the costs of the project. The calls that rolled in that day and the days following always made it worthwhile. Sometimes we would complete the whole development in half a day. By the afternoon, the guys who were sent to post flyers were busy making even more money cleaning windows—all in the development they just worked in. Some people called right away, so we tried to get them on the schedule as quickly as possible.

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Don't Be Annoying

It's easy to annoy people with flyers. Use common sense and your best judgment. If you have a feeling someone is going to be annoyed in the place you're putting a flyer, you're probably right. Skip it. Don't be the guy who puts flyers in car windshields at the grocery store parking lot. You will only be wasting the paper and annoying the people.

Have you seen the plastic bag method? The marketer puts a flyer in a ziplock bag with a rock. Then, they drive around and throw these bags on driveways. I can't believe anyone would think this is a good idea. You're littering at this point. Although I can see the appeal of this method for rapid distribution, I would be annoyed if someone did this at my house. Please don't do this.

Legal Concerns

Check your local laws first. Many towns have ordinances and laws on the books prohibiting the distribution of flyers. Mailboxes are off limits across the United States. Use caution, common sense, and good judgment, and you will be OK.

It Doesn't Scale

Unfortunately, because flyer distribution relies on labor, it doesn't scale well. You also have to navigate various legal concerns. Because of this, it's not a great long-term strategy. But it is an excellent short-term strategy to help get your new company off the ground. On top of that, it's a great way to get good at

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processing, testing, and redesigning pieces.

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CHAPTER 13: NEWSPAPERS AND PHONE BOOKS

Print is not dead! Although so much has moved to online only, many print-only solutions remain that can be very successful for your business. As a matter of fact, I have observed that with fewer and fewer people using print, it's becoming more and more effective.

Newspapers

I have always used newspapers as part of my marketing plan in one way or another.

There are a lot of newspaper options in our area. Being close to New York City, people love the *New York Times*. We also have the *Star-Ledger*, which is a New Jersey-specific paper, as well as the *New Jersey Herald*, which is a county-only paper. Then we have other, smaller, town-based regional papers.

A definite inverse relationship exists between a newspaper's size and its effectiveness. This relationship is also reflective of the paper's affordability to the advertiser. The bigger the paper, the more expensive and less effective it's going to be for you. Niche down and go as local as possible.

- My local papers' distribution rate, from highest to lowest:

New York Times

New Jersey Herald

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Strauss local regional papers

- My local papers' cost to advertise, from highest to lowest:

New York Times

New Jersey Herald

Strauss local regional papers

As you can imagine, we focused all our energy on our Strauss local papers. They have seventeen different versions that they put out, and all are tied to specific towns in my area. Over the years, I advertised in them quite a bit. I ran classifieds, display ads, and inserts. I even used them for help wanted ads to assist in finding employees.

The beauty of these papers, aside from the lower cost and barrier to entry, is the personalization.

The more personal you can make your message, the better. If you speak on a more personal level as much as possible, it's going to resonate with your prospective customer.

For example, I knew that the Goshen Strauss newspaper was going to go only to residents of Goshen Township.

You better believe I started all my messages in that paper with "Dear Goshen Resident" or "Attention Resident of Goshen" or some other variation. I would find a way to speak to them as a resident of that town in some way.

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Research

I would bet you have a local paper that could potentially be an excellent source of leads for your company. If you do, call them up and get some statistics. How many papers do they have? What's the distribution rate? What day of the week is it delivered?

Consider our discussion of demographics in chapter 1. Do any of the towns you identified as gold have a local paper you can capitalize on? If so, run them through your filter to determine if it could be worth using.

Newspaper Inserts

This is going to be the best bang for your buck in the local paper. Have you noticed these when you open up a paper? Look to the middle and see the different handouts, grocery store coupons, etc. Call your local paper and see what they would charge you to insert your flyer or direct mail piece.

Usually, for a nominal fee (a couple of cents per piece), they will add in your printed material. They will often allow you to provide your own print, or they will print one for you. Crunch the numbers on each way to determine what's going to be cheapest. But if it's close, I recommend providing your own print. It's the only way you can guarantee the quality. Plus, it will make your piece stand out. It will likely be the only thing in there not printed on the same type of cheap paper. It's easy to look good if you print it yourself. To clarify when I say "yourself," I mean have it printed at a professional print service, and then supply it to the

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newspaper company.

We would insert the same Every Door Direct Mail 8.5 × 11-style mailer we distributed via the post office. This helped cut down on printing fees because we were ordering in bulk. And it assisted in giving us a clear, consistent look and message. I believe inserts to be effective because they are in-your-face ads. If you open the paper and just flip around a bit, it's almost impossible to miss them.



PSD - Newspaper-Insert

Newspaper Classified Ads

My first paid advertisement was a small classified ad in the back of the local paper. It was under the home improvement selection.

It read:

Twenty windows cleaned

\$179—in and out

Screens included

Storms not included

Phone number

It was just a straight offer, with no real call to action or information. But it worked; it brought in work and kept me busy. Over

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the years, the classifieds became way less effective. I eventually pulled the ad in favor of more frequent inserts. These were effective at the time because, pre-Google, people would go there to search.

Display Ads

These are the larger-type ads sprinkled throughout the paper, usually 3 × 3 inches or so. I experimented with these on and off, with limited success. I wouldn't recommend them or use them again. They get lost and actually require a person to read the paper to find them.

Exterior Sticky-Notes

Have you seen these? I used these for a year or so right before I sold my business, and they worked well. I would consider using them again. I like them because they look like a coupon, and they give you the ability to make a straight offer. Plus, they're on the outside, and prospective customers are more likely to notice them. This is also a seminew concept in print advertising, and people haven't become numb to them yet.



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Press Releases

This is something that I wish I took more advantage of but neglected to capitalize on. As I think back on it, I guess I had an aversion to trying to make a big deal out of things involving my company and me. As the business owner, I hid from the public whenever possible. I'm not sure why, but that's how it was. I realize now that this held me back from taking the company even further.

If I could do it again, I would try to get a press release into the paper on a semiregular basis. After all, it's nothing more than free publicity. I was paying for publicity, so it was foolish of me not to suck up the free stuff when I could have. I had all sorts of things I could have done press releases about: new management hires, new service offerings, charity giveaways, contests, etc. I was doing it all, and I never told anyone about it. It was a mistake I won't make again if I ever have another local business.

Phone Books

In 2003, I was paying for ad space in twenty-two different phone books. We made a killing on them, for the rate of return was huge. In 2004, we lost money on all but one of them. In 2005, I canceled every single one of them but stayed with my free local listing.

For the past ten years, whenever my yearly phone book delivery has arrived, the procedure has been the same. Bust it out and check my listing. Then, look for any new competitors that may have popped up, and see if any competitors have disappeared.

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Toss it in the trash, rinse, and repeat year after year.

I was over at my grandfather's house a couple of months ago. I noticed he had a phone book right by his wall-mounted rotary phone. I asked him if he still used the phone book. He said, "Yes, of course, at least once a month." I wasn't surprised. Although I would never pay for another phone book ad, I do believe there's great value in having your free listing current and up to date. People still do get them, and they still reference them. These people are likely not in your target market, but who cares? It's free and will generate calls.

Create a list of all the phone books in your service area, and give them a call. Ask for a free copy, and they will send you one. Check your listing. If it's not right or not active, give them a call and request to get listed in it. The data for the businesses that don't pay for an ad are generated via public record. There's a fair chance it will be there and will be accurate, but you never know. Investigate it, and make sure you're listed and the information is correct.

Phone Book Sticky-Notes

I have seen these showing up on phone books recently. If the price is right, I would give them a try.



CHAPTER 14: 4 X 6 POSTCARDS

I love 4 x 6 postcards! They are one of the easiest, most affordable ways to get clients and prospectives to take action. There's no envelope to open, just an instant message in the mailbox. You can use them to attract new customers or to get past clients back on the schedule. I prefer to use them on repeat clients and prospectives in my system—that is, people who are already in my database. This includes customers who have had a service done before and prospectives who called in for an estimate and never made it all the way to the schedule.

Example Card

I started with a once-a-year “time to do the windows” reminder. This is an updated version of it:



PSD - Postcard 4 x 6 Time To Clean

It is simple, effective, and to the point. We mailed this to our

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existing client database. I would coordinate it so it would most likely hit the clients' mailboxes on the first day of spring. I'm not sure if the timing of it was superimportant, but part of me always thought it was a real psychological trigger—the first day of spring, spring cleaning, etc.

After a long, cold, slow winter, I would look forward to this mailing like you wouldn't believe. I knew all winter long that no matter how slow we were, this spring mailing would bring in a massive influx of calls.

Frequency

How often should you be sending these postcards? That depends on your goals.

I started with a mailing once a year. Then, we shifted to twice a year: spring and fall. That led to a four times a year: spring, summer, fall, and then prewinter.

For quarterly mailings, here are some concepts you can run with:

Mailing #1: "It's spring—time to do the windows. Let's reserve your spot on the schedule now."

Mailing #2: "It's August; we are slow. Here is a nice discount and some other services we offer that you may not know about."

Mailing #3: "Fall is here! Did you know we also offer gutter cleaning?"

Mailing #4: “Winter is coming. The in-laws are coming over, and the weather is going to be dreary. Brighten up your life with some clean windows.”

Those are the general messages we tried to convey. We mixed them up over the years and experimented with new things and new add-on services. It was a winning formula, and I stuck with it.

They say—though I’m not sure who they are—that it’s much easier to close a repeat customer than a new one. And it’s much cheaper to get a repeat customer to schedule than to get a new one. *They* are right. These four quarterly mailings provided us with an instant surge of work. It became a predictable and guaranteed way to fill up our schedule.

Timing

I talked about how we would send the spring mailing all at once. I would usually divide the other three mailings into four separate parts each. We would release them to the post office over the course of four weeks. This helped smooth out the influx of calls and better distribute our workload.

Group the Workload

We would even take this a step further and divide our service area into quadrants. We would mail to one quadrant at a time instead of across our whole service area at once. This would help cluster the scheduling and cut the drive time from job to job.

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When to Mail

You can take the planning of your mailings a step further and try to coordinate what day of the week they arrive. I obsessed over this for years. Here is a little bit of theory about arrival dates (the date that a mailing hits a client's mailbox).

Monday—People are busy. They don't have time to make decisions about things like this.

Tuesday—This is a decent day. People feel caught up and have time to think.

Wednesday—Traditionally, the least amount of direct mail arrives on this day. If it's not buried, your message can more likely get noticed.

Thursday—People are starting to think about the weekend.

Friday—People are almost in full weekend mode. They say Friday is the best day for people to make impulse decisions.

Saturday—This isn't such a great day. I don't even check my mail on this day of the week.

Knowing all this, and after years of unscientific testing, I deduce that Thursdays and Fridays are the best days of the week for your direct mail to hit.

Here's why:

Usually, it's the wife who makes the "Let's get the windows

cleaned” decisions. But to avoid a battle, the wife will most likely run this decision by the husband.

Research into my database shows that women schedule 76% of all window cleaning appointments.

My thoughts are as follows: The piece arrives Thursday or Friday. The wife thinks about it and mulls it over. She then presents the idea to the husband over the weekend. He yays or nays it. The wife then will set the piece aside and call on Monday. Monday will likely be the day of the week you get the most phone calls.

I say “unscientific testing” above because I could never guarantee the exact date the mailing would arrive. I could guess and go by the average two days, but I could never be sure or guarantee it.

Efficiently Processing Your Mailings

When I first started, I would have one of the workers from the office put a stamp on each postcard. I soon realized we were wasting a ton of money this way. These days, you can get a postcard stamp for forty-nine cents. But if you use a mailing service with a real five-digit sort, you can get that price down as low as twenty-six cents.

Keep in mind that with a mailing service, you will pay a processing fee for putting the whole thing together. But if you are doing any more than a handful of cards, it is worth it in the long run to use a service.

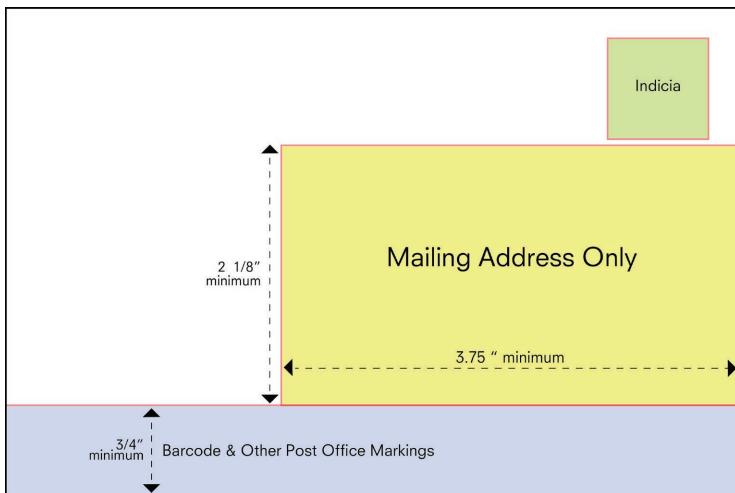
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Watch the Weather

If it's set to rain, skip the date or move it. Coordinate it so your approximate day of arrival does not happen on a rainy day. Coordinate it for a sunny day after a rain, if possible. Most window cleaners watch the weather, so this shouldn't be a problem. It's just one of those little things that will increase your conversions and response rates. Be sure to keep track of the weather on the day your mailings hit or you think they would be hitting. It's interesting to see what affect it has on your results.

Designing Your Own

We have hundreds of premade templates you can use at TheWcra.com. You can also use the ones that come with this book. But if you have the desire to try to make your own—and you should at some point!—please keep the following specifications in mind:



Please note the shaded areas on this image, which represent the space that you are going to want to leave free and clear for the post office. The white area is open for you to use as you see fit. I would recommend using this space for your contact details. Add some info about your service and maybe a coupon.

The other side is completely open for you to use as you please. This is a great place for compelling imagery, a headline, and a call to action. It's also appropriate to use your phone number and web address on the front.

What you do, say, and present on this card all depends on what your end goal is. Do you want to prompt repeat customers to come back and try a new service? Do you want to remind your regular customers to schedule early because fall appointments fill up fast?

Whatever it is, go into it with your end goal in mind, and figure out the simplest, easiest way to convey your message. Include your call to action (what you want them to do). Call now or go online or text for info. Don't be afraid to tell customers exactly what you want them to do. Be specific for the best results.

Visit the US Postal Service's official website at usps.com. Doing so will give you more in-depth specifics on postal regulations and sizes. A wealth of information is there for review. If you do mailings infrequently, it will be helpful to visit before each mailing. Nothing is worse than designing a card and paying for the print, only to find out it's not eligible to send because a mistake is on it.

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Other 4 x 6 Sending Options

Take a look at SendJim.com. It allows you to send personalized postcards to your customers from your smartphone. These are so cool because they contain a photo of your customer's actual home on the front.

All you do is take a picture of the house and upload it to the app. With a couple of clicks, you can trigger a postcard mailing of your choice directly to the client's postal box. You can use it for existing clients or for targeting new ones.

SendJim also allows you to build sequences into the system for postcards to automatically mail out on future dates. You can schedule it to send cards to the customer or prospective customer at any frequency you choose. The sequence can include any combination of cards as well; it doesn't have to be the same one.

CHAPTER 15: EDDM

In the beginning, we put out flyers, and the flyers were good. After a few years, that evolved into an in-house program of mailing to special lists we created. We recorded the addresses of the most desirable areas and mailed into them on a regular basis.

After a year or two on our in-house program, we changed to saturation mailings. With those, we were able to mail to a whole zip code for a much-cheaper postage rate. This was an interesting method, and it brought in a whole-new element of affordability. We could instantly contact twice the number of people for half the price. But it lacked the quality of laser targeting; it was too broad. We wasted a lot of money dumping mailers into areas with addresses unlikely to use our services. In comes EDDM to save the day.

What Is EDDM?

EDDM stands for “Every Door Direct Mail,” a program run by the US Postal Service. It allows you to mail large volumes of big postcards for an affordable price. The best part is that you don’t have to mail to the whole zip code at once to get the volume discount.

Here is how it works:

Every zip code has different routes within it, and every address in a zip code gets assigned to one of the routes. The post office uses these routes to process and deliver all the mail that goes through the system.

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When you mail someone a letter, it goes to the post office and gets sorted into one of the different routes. The address on it dictates what route it goes into. A route is nothing more than a subsection within a zip code based on location. The post office breaks a zip code into these separate routes for efficiency purposes. Every mail carrier is assigned different routes.

The EDDM program reveals to you on a map the locations of these different routes. Using the website, you can see what street gets tagged to what route. The program then allows you to mail to the individual routes one at a time or in groups for a discounted price. You have to meet a couple of conditions to use the system, and I will discuss those below.

This is powerful because it allows you to get the benefits of saturation mailing. This provides mass delivery at a discounted rate while allowing you to be selective about where and to whom you are mailing.

We used our market research report to niche down and identify the top zip codes and towns to target. The EDDM program allows you to take it a step further and niche down within the pre-selected zip code.

We can segment in and mail to only the most desirable areas or routes within any given town. You can hit all the best areas and exclude the undesirable ones. You can cherry-pick the routes with the awesome houses and omit the ones with the apartments and low property values.

Cost Comparison

The cost of postage on a normal 4×6 postcard is thirty-five cents. Postage is only one part of the cost, though. Look at this breakdown for a 4×6 postcard, and then we will compare it to an EDDM piece. The analysis assumes this is a five-thousand-piece mailing.

4×6 cost breakdown:

- 1) Printing: \$122.
- 2) Delivery to you: \$47.
- 3) Address preparation: \$100.
- 4) Stamping: Time or cost investment.
- 5) Database information: \$600. This assumes you are buying a list. Remove this cost if you already have a database of addresses to use.
- 6) Postage: Thirty-five cents per piece = \$1,750. You can get this down to around twenty-six cents a piece by using a mailing service.

Approximate total cost: \$2,619.

8.5×11 EDDM cost breakdown:

- 1) Printing: \$418.

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- 2) Delivery to you: \$117.
- 3) Address preparation: \$0.
- 4) Stamping: \$0.
- 5) Database information: \$0.
- 6) Postage: 18.3 cents per piece = \$915.

Approximate total cost: \$1,450.

As you can see, it is about half the cost to do an EDDM-style mailing in comparison with a standard, old-school 4 × 6 delivery.

Eight Reasons You Should Consider EDDM

1) Price

Yes, your average print price is higher because of the increased size of the card. But your big savings come in on postage. When you see that you can deliver a large 8.5 × 11 postcard for just eighteen cents in postage, it makes a lot of sense. The savings comes in because you are handling some of the legwork. You do the paperwork and take it to its final destination: the post office. This saves you money and the post office time.

2) Ease of use

The usps.com/eddm website makes it easy to select exactly where and when you want the mailings to happen. It also pro-

vides demographic information to help you decide where to mail.

3) Effortless to track and measure

If you are testing and measuring all your marketing efforts, as we recommend, you will appreciate how easy it is to gauge the success or failure of your campaigns.

It is easy to keep track of the price of a mailing on a per-town basis. After a couple of runs, you can tell which ones are profitable and which ones are not. You can experiment with areas and double down when you see that they are working. You can also bail out of an area if it's a failure with little risk.

4) Levels the playing field

Get your message into your prospectives' mailboxes for the same price as your competitor. You can mail to the same people they do for the same price.

5) Entry to untapped markets

It's easy to break into hot, new neighborhoods. You can experiment in new areas from the comfort of your office. If they have a mailbox, you can get to them. There are no more exclusive neighborhoods or areas; everyone is accessible.

6) Automation, speed, and scale

EDDM is easy to systemize. Everything from the route selection to delivery can be automated. It's easy to refine to a handful of winning areas and then to rinse and repeat over and over again.

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The system is replicable, and it scales. Someone dispatching flyers or door hangers could maybe put out a maximum of three hundred to four hundred per day. With EDDM, you could mail to five thousand people per zip code per day.

7) Routing and dispatching

Workload distribution and planning becomes more manageable. It's easier than ever to control the areas you work in. By mailing strategically, you can dictate where and when your crews work. Clustering your advertising in set areas helps control when and where jobs get done. That helps control costs and minimizes drive time. The less time your crews spend driving from job to job, the more time they have in the day for revenue-generating work.

With other methods of advertising, you are bound to be driving around all over the place from job to job. Staff can rack up hours of paid drive time. Spend that time working instead of driving.

8) The size advantage

Look at the size comparison of a 4 x 6 and an 8.5 x 11. You get all this extra real estate. When it's delivered, it's not lost in the mail; it's supporting the mail. It's so big that when the mail carrier delivers the mail to your prospective customer, they will usually use this large post-



card as the base for the rest of the mail. This means that your piece will be looked at last, rather than blend in with the rest of the mail. This is what you want. You can't miss it, and your potential client *will* notice your piece.

How to Launch Your First EDDM Campaign

Section 1—Budget and Repetition

Consult your marketing budget and decide how much you are going to allocate. I would look at this from a quarterly perspective. Do the math, and decide on an amount to spend over the course of a twelve-week period.

While budgeting, keep repetition in mind; it's one of the key factors to success. Prospective customers have to see your message repeatedly before they will respond in droves. On your first mailing, there is a chance that you will get zero responses; although it's not likely, it is possible. With each mailing into an area, the likelihood of a higher response rate increases.

I had areas that we would mail into a couple of times a year, and then I had other areas that we would mail into ten times a year.

Don't get discouraged if your first mailing doesn't receive an amazing response; it's normal. If you go in expecting just to do one mailing and see great results, it will fail. It doesn't work that way. If I can't budget to mail to a route more than one time, I won't do it. It's a long-term strategy.

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Section 2—Research the best areas on where to focus

Our initial market research data that we collected helped us pinpoint what towns to focus on. Now we will focus on what areas of those towns are best to mail to. Take your initial market research report and combine that with data available at eddm.usps.com. Then, add real-life local knowledge of the area or research using Google Street View.

Using that formula, you can come up with a great list of locations to target. This list of prospective areas in your service area will be the most responsive to your service and offers. The goal is to strategically create a list of people who are the most likely to respond to your offers.

Follow these steps:

- 1) Get your list of top towns from the Market Research Report.
- 2) Navigate to eddm.usps.com.
- 3) Enter your best zip code. We will work one town at a time first.
- 4) The website will show all the individual routes in the zip code shaded in over the map. Move your mouse around, and you will see different routes highlighted.
- 5) Click on individual routes and numbers. Prices will start to calculate for you in the right-hand column. You will see the number of pieces required for delivery in that route, and it will display your total price.

6) Under the search bar, it will also display extra demographic information to you. This is important information to assist you in segmenting the data. With a couple of clicks, you can determine the best and worst areas to mail within that town. You can filter by a few different attributes: route number, residential or business, total count within, average recipient age, and income.

7) Select: Show Table: The top-left corner of the map will reveal all the information within that zip code in an easy-to-use virtual spreadsheet. Sort all the available attributes from highest to lowest. Give the most attention to income and age range. People with the most disposable income are likely to be those most likely to use your service.

8) Note the different route types. You have PO Box, City Carrier, and Rural.

8.1) PO Boxes: You know what they are. You find them inside the post office itself. Chances are, you will want to skip them.

8.2) City Carrier Routes: These are typically loaded with apartments and business locations where the delivery person can walk from stop to stop. These people will be less likely to take advantage of your service.

8.3) Rural Routes: This is where you will find the most desirable areas. You won't know for sure, though, until you tear through each route and select the best ones.

Yes, your zip code might have a median home income of

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\$150,000. But within that zip code are routes that bring that average number up and ones that bring that number down. The big, fancy houses in the exclusive subdivisions drive the number up. The lower income apartments behind the shopping center bring it down.

Keep in mind that identifying where *not* to mail is just as important as identifying where to mail. Be a ninja, or better yet, be a sniper expertly targeting where to and where not to send mail.

9) Bring your knowledge of the zip code into the process. This is your area; you know what's up. You know where the good houses are and where the bad houses are. In my best zip code, we never mailed to the whole thing. We segmented out the routes that contained apartments and businesses.

When I mailed, I took it a step further and segmented out a specific route in an older part of town. This area had mostly storm windows and lots of screen burn. With those two factors, we were never able to be superefficient there. Because of that, I segmented them out and cut my budgeted amount in half. I used the savings to mail to the other awesome houses in the area an extra time. We cut out the crap and doubled down on the gold.

If you don't have local knowledge of a zip code you're considering targeting, check it out in person. Print out an overview map from the route selector, and go take a look. Take a drive around to look at the homes. Confirm they fit into the mold of your most ideal service area.

You can also do this via Google Maps and Google Street View,

but you will pick up more details and info to help you make better decisions by seeing it in person.

10) Keep your eye on the price calculation in the right-hand column, and remember to spread your budget out over a period of twelve weeks.

Once you have selected the routes you would like to mail to, hit the blue “Continue” button. If you are not signed in, the website will prompt you to at this point. The next page will display an order summary. It will show the routes selected and the total number of delivery addresses in each.

At this point, save your work. The site will keep all the details of the order saved in your account. Log out for now; we will be back!

Section 3—Select your piece

Decide on the size

To qualify for the EDDM program, your mailer must meet these size conditions. The USPS says:

“Your mailer must be more than 10.5 inches in length and 6.125 inches in height. Cannot be more than 15 inches long and 12 inches high.”

Keep in mind that the price you pay on postage does not fluctuate based on size. The price of printing is the only thing that will change with size. That’s good news! You can mail a really big piece for an affordable price. My experience tells me bigger is

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better with mailings. Get the size as big as you can afford.

Popular sizes of EDDM

6.25 × 11 | 8.5 × 11 | 6.5 × 9 | 7 × 10 | 12 × 4.5

All these will qualify for the same postage price. I have experimented with most, and by far my favorite is the 8.5 × 11. Yes, you can save a few bucks on your printing by shrinking it. But your postage will be the same no matter what size you choose.

I believe it's worth it to go with the 8.5 × 11 size because it really stands out in the mailbox. It's the size of a full sheet of paper but thicker. When it gets delivered, it's always the biggest thing in there. The mail is often delivered wrapped in the piece itself.

Look at this picture—you can't miss it. The likelihood of the mail recipient seeing it goes through the roof.

There is no way it's going to be missed.

If you create your own design, be sure it conforms to all the postal regulations.



PDF- EDDM Size Guideline

Decide on the card

Will it get read, though? That's the question.

The decision of where to send your card is of equal importance to the quality of card you decide to send. Our response rates doubled when we switched from homemade cards to professionally designed ones.



PSD - Postcard 6.5 x 9 Waiting for Spring

Shameless plug alert

At TheWCRA.com are hundreds of professionally designed templates in all different sizes you can use. You can download a template and add in all your own information. Every part of them is completely editable. You can change the text, the colors, the images, and the logo. If editing isn't your thing, we have an affordable service that will take care of the whole process for you.

Confirm

No matter what you decide to send, make sure the message it delivers lines up with the town you are sending it to. Confirm the message is appropriate based on the demographics and what you know about the area.

Personalize

Personalize it whenever possible. I would put the name of the town I was sending to on the card whenever possible. The more you can personalize it to your target area, the better the results

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will be.



The image shows a marketing flyer for Sparta Residents! Window Cleaning. At the top, it says "Sparta Residents!" in large, bold, black letters. Below that is a phone number "862.266.0677". To the right are three logos: BBB Accredited Business, OSHA Trained, and a 100% Satisfaction Guaranteed seal. The text "CALL NOW TO SCHEDULE" is followed by the phone number. A note says "If you get a busy signal, please keep trying!". Below this is the company name "SPARTA" in orange and "WINDOW CLEANING" in blue. A list of services includes Chandelier Cleaning, Kick-free Glass Streak Removal, Window Cleaning, Whitening, and Gift Certificates also available. The website "www.spartawindowcleaning.com" is listed. The main offer section has three boxes: "ROOF WASHING!" (Offer good through May 31, 2016), "WINDOW CLEANING! 10 WINDOWS - INSIDE AND OUT!" (Offer good through May 31, 2016), and "HOUSE WASHING! ANY SIZE HOME (VINYL ONLY)" (Offer good through May 31, 2016). Each box lists services like basic screen cleaning, frame and sill wipe-down, and storm windows not included. Regular prices are \$300, \$349, and \$349 respectively, with discounts of \$100 off.



PSD - News Paper Insert

I would literally print “Hey, (Town Name) resident” right on it. Don’t be afraid to go this far.

Section 4—Prepare your plan: how many to send and frequency

Schedule it on your marketing calendar. Think about the spring season; you have three months and twelve weeks. Take your budget numbers on how much you can spend for the quarter and distribute it over a twelve-week period. Try to set it up to distribute as evenly as possible.

Follow this example scenario, and I will show you how I would

spend my budget. For the sake of simplicity, I will illustrate this in simple numbers; adjust it up or down based on your own budget.

Let's say you have \$6,000 to spend over a three-month period.

How many to send

Pick one design to use for the twelve-week period, and spread it out over four towns. That includes four completely different zip codes.

Using @Cost Printing, I can get twenty thousand 8.5×11 postcards printed and shipped to my door for \$1,824. The postage price on delivery of twenty thousand pieces would be \$3,660. After those two main costs, I'm left with about \$550 to process and put together my mailings.

Frequency and repetition

From there, I would take the twenty thousand pieces and either split them in half or thirds. I could mail to ten thousand people twice or to 6,666 people three times in a twelve-week period.

My goals and experience with the area would help me decide which way to go. If I were in the exploratory phase of testing out new areas to mail to, I would likely mail twice to ten thousand people. If I had winning areas that did well in the past, I would definitely mail to them three times each.

Remember, my numbers are just for the sake of example. Please use your budgetary allowances and goals to determine how many

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you send.

Even distribution

The important things are repetition and even distribution. Spreading your mailing out over a twelve-week period will bring you a steady workflow. It becomes predictable, and you will start to know how many calls you will receive in advance of the mailing.

You will soon realize that you can increase the workflow by increasing the number of cards sent. It becomes like a faucet. Turn the faucet one way (send more cards) to increase the workflow. Turn the faucet the other way (send fewer cards) to decrease it.

Plan it out as best as possible on your marketing calendar. On the website, you can always shuffle around the arrival date to the post office if you have to.

Section 5—Ordering your card

Your ordering options

- 1) Order it, and have it delivered to you for preparation.
- 2) Order it, and have it delivered to your own mail service for preparation.
- 3) Order the card from a printer that will also prepare your mailing and deliver your pieces to the post office for you. If you are interested in learning more, look for a company that offers full-

service EDDM. At Cost Printing is one of them. They can print your pieces and send out the mailing for you.

For this writing, we will assume you are going to pick option number one. I picked this option so you can understand all the steps involved. Feel free to outsource this if you like. But I do believe it is helpful to have some understanding of how the whole process works.

Bundling

Per USPS regulations, to qualify for the EDDM program, your mailers must arrive bundled in groups of fifty or one hundred—no more, no less.



Bundled? Yep. Look at that picture, and take note of the string:

You can order your print prebundled from some printers if they have the special machinery. You can save a few bucks by doing this yourself, but I wouldn't recommend it. If you are going to do it yourself, I would suggest using a scale. Dividing them by weight is quicker than counting them out.

Watch the mailing area

Further postal regulations talk about the EDDM mailing area. They say all EDDM pieces must have the mailing label on the top half of the tall piece. The orientation of the label doesn't

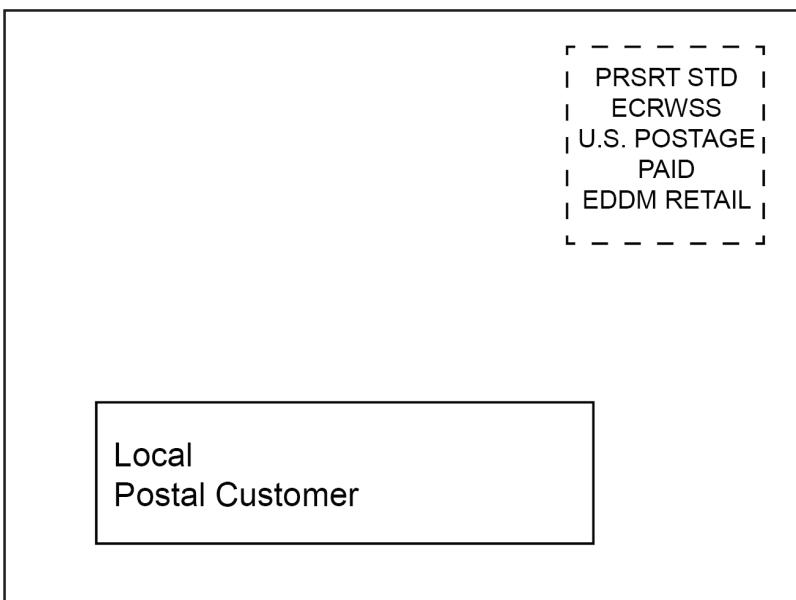
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matter. The shortest end will always be the top half of the piece. It has to say “Local Postal Customer.”

Your label has to be in this area and say “Local Postal Customer.”

Indicia

- This is an Indicia.
| PRSRT STD |
| ECRWSS |
| U.S. POSTAGE | You have to have it on every piece, and it
| PAID | must be in the appropriate mailing area.
| EDDM RETAIL |
----- This is what it looks like in the mailing area.





PSD - EDDM Retail Indicia

a high-res Indicia here if you need one

Please note that all templates from this book and TheWCRA.com come with the proper Indicia by default. It should be right on your template and be added on as it gets printed.

Better safe than sorry!



PDF - Every Door Direct Mail User Guide

Reference before your first order.

You can also pull a fresh version down from the USPS website. I would recommend doing so, as they could update it at any time.

Confirm your card is in total compliance before you order. With the recent influx of EDDM to the post office, the guidelines have been becoming stricter. The post office inspects it at check-in; if it doesn't meet all the specifications, they will not accept it for delivery.

Section 6—Complete your EDDM order

Head back to the USPS website

Get your saved order, and complete the transaction. You can pay online or at the post office that day. The website will then

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prompt you to save your order again.

The final page

Here, you will get your order summary. You will be prompted to double check your sizes and remind you to prepare your mailer in bundles of fifty or one hundred.

Print your forms. You will need to have one separate facing slip for each bundle you create. Take note of the quantities. If my mailing has 1,572 pieces in bundles of fifty, I would need thirty-two facing slips or sixteen facing slips in bundles of one hundred. Either is acceptable.

The website will prompt you to give a nickname to your order. Do so, and make it as descriptive as possible. Every order allows for a unique nickname. Naming it in a descriptive way will come in handy in the future when you are deciding on where to resend to. Consider a consistent naming structure like this: Dirty Card—Sparta—Version 1.

You reference the town, the card, and the version of the card. It is important always to note the version for your “testing and tweaking.” You can name it any way you like, but just keep the future in mind.

Print your forms!

You can download all the forms you need with one click on one page. Print the mailing statement and front-facing slips. Or just hit the big blue button “Print All Forms At Once.” And you are finished!

Section 7—Post office delivery day

Your semiflexible weekly delivery day

Remember in the previous step we scheduled the drop-off day. You want to lock into stone the act of doing a mailing each week. You don't need to be as rigid with the day of week that you deliver it. Allow for a little flexibility.

We would always try to deliver our EDDM every Tuesday. We made it a standing appointment on our marketing calendar, so we always made it a priority. I recommend you do the same, but don't forget to build in some flexibility. Although you will want to schedule it every week, leave room for change. Consider factors such as weather, holidays, and time of month. They will all affect the way it all comes together. Do your research, and be flexible.

If I had set to deliver on a Tuesday, I would assume that it would hit mailboxes on Wednesday or Thursday.

If I saw rain in the forecast, I would push the drop-off date out to Wednesday, assuming that the weather forecast said we would have a sunny Friday. Sunny days are the best!

You can apply the same theory to other things happening in the week. Work around any current events that could affect the effectiveness of the mailing or things that would distract people from calling.

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Don't forget the bundles

I'm hoping you ordered your cards prebundled in stacks of fifty or one hundred. If not, you will have to handle it.

Add the paperwork

Take your printed paperwork and your forward-facing slips and affix one slip per bundle. You can tuck them in under your bundles' string.

Off to the post office!

Pack them up, and deliver them to the appropriate post office.

If you get to the post office in the morning, there is a chance your postcards will go back out the door the same day. I wouldn't count on it in your planning, but it is possible. They also have the possibility to sit around the post office for a day or two. If you get them there on a Friday, they are going to sit there till Monday. Sitting around for a day or two is a safe bet.

Section 8—Analyze and review

EDDM is very trackable. It's a cinch to gauge, analyze, and adjust based on observable feedback. The costs are cut and dried, and it's no trouble to pin a call from a customer to a campaign. What you perceive as an acceptable return depends on your growth goals. Watch the numbers, and don't go over budget.

If an area isn't getting any traction after two mailings, consider changing routes. Or maybe you need to try a whole-new location. Start small, and test new areas. Don't forget: fire bullets and then cannonballs.

Section 9—Rinse and repeat

The website eddm.usps.com saves your past orders for easy re-order in the future. It also allows you to mark individual orders as a “favorite.” Just click “Order History” and put a heart next to any of your best mailing areas. With two clicks, you can instantly repeat any past order. Remember to give an accurate nickname when you order; it will be much easier to analyze and track in the future.

Once you get in a groove with EDDM, it becomes very easy to automate. You can streamline and document all the processes involved, everything from selecting your card to ordering to final delivery. When done right, this can be your company's number-one money-making system.

Common Reasons EDDM Fails

- 1) Lack of repetition
- 2) Poor planning

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CHAPTER 16: DIRECT SALES LETTERS

Direct Sales Letters

I used to love direct sales letters. They are simple, cost effective, and affordable. I find that they work best on past customers or someone you're trying to get back on the schedule for another service. They will also work for attracting new customers. I believe they are most effective when you already have some existing rapport with the person.

When to Use

In the beginning of my business, I had more time than money. I used sales letters more often. As my business grew, I stepped away from them because they weren't as affordable to distribute. Other mass-mailing methods allowed us to reach farther for a lower price.

In the beginning, I would use them to attract new clients. Then, I started using them to remind existing customers to get back on the schedule. I remember first deciding to use direct sales letters to get into an exclusive gated community. I wanted to get in there and flyer-bomb the high-income pocket, but I couldn't get past the gate. I could, however, look up the community on a map and record their addresses. I did this and fired off a letter to each homeowner. I was eventually allowed in.

Sales Letters for New-Customer Acquisition

Here is a direct sales letter I used with great success over the

years. Before you read this, do know I think this letter is completely absurd. But it does work, and it does get results. This is it:

Sparta, NJ—Prepare yourself for this. A survey conducted by a London agency and published in *Forbes Magazine* revealed a foul truth. Here's what they discovered.

One in every ten British men wears his underwear for up to three days. One in every one hundred goes a full week. What is going on over there? As bizarre as that seems, there's more. They obsess over their windows. One in every ten British homeowners gets their windows cleaned once a month. That's not all. Only one in every twenty New Jersey and New York homeowners gets their windows cleaned twice per year. Maybe the Brits are using their spare laundry money to keep their windows shiny, who knows?

What I do know is that you would like to have your windows cleaned without breaking into the underwear fund. Because August and September are typically slow for us, we can offer you a great deal.

The Clean Underwear Relief Package

The Supreme Clean:

- Detailed cleaning of standard windows—in and out—INCLUDED
- Hand-cleaned screens—INCLUDED
- Sill cleaning—INCLUDED
- Frames wiped down—INCLUDED
- Total satisfaction guaranteed—INCLUDED

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All this is yours for only \$279 for a limited time.

Up to twenty windows—excludes storm windows

“Neat & clean. They left everything as they found it. Very pleased & you come highly recommended! You will hear from me again real soon! Thank you!”—Steve Monmouth, Boonton NJ

OUR EXPERTISE

With more than a million clean windows under our belt, you benefit from the experience.

YOUR SAFETY

Insured \$1 million for your protection.

ACCOUNTABILITY

You are guaranteed to love your amazing, clean windows. This offer ends September 30, 2016, so don't delay...

Call NOW for an appointment or FREE quote.

862-266-0677

Spartawindowcleaning.com

(Sign the letter with your name.)

X

What makes this sales letter work? It includes a set of key elements that all great sales letters have:

- 1) It has an attention-capturing headline.
- 2) It talks more about “them,” the customer, than you.
- 3) Even when talking about my company, it’s really talking about them (“Your Safety”).
- 4) It has a good story and a little humor.
- 5) It has bullet points and bold font in select areas. This caters to the skimmers and helps make your point clear.
- 6) It’s short; it fits on one page.
- 7) It’s personal. Even though I don’t use their names, I reference their town and state.

Make the seven points a priority in any sales letter you write. Your letters will be more effective and profitable because of them.



Doc - Direct Sales Letter For New Clients

Sales Letters for Repeat Clients

A direct sales letter to a repeat client is way easier to write and put together. It’s also much easier to personalize because you already have their name and information.

A letter to a client already in your system can be as simple as this:

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Dear Mary,

It's that time of year again! Spring is right around the corner. Because you are one of our favorite customers, I wanted to drop you a note early.

Our schedule is filling up fast, and I want to be sure you can get your most preferred appointment time.

Also, we are implementing a small price increase this year. But if you schedule your appointment before the first day of spring, we can waive that for you.

Give me a call today at 862-266-0677, and we can pick out a good time for your spring appointment.

X



Doc - Direct Sales Letter For Repeat Clients

Thoughts on Sales Letters

For repeat clients, I eventually dropped sales letters for 4 x 6 postcards. We had an active client base of over twenty-five thousand customers, and it was no longer affordable for us. But if I had a repeat client base of five hundred or fewer customers, I would likely still be using direct sales letters. I would use them to invite past clients back on the schedule and to introduce new services.

I can't stress enough how useful direct sales letters can be for

getting a higher-than-usual response rate and how superb they are for getting access to private communities.

Test your response rates on hand-addressed envelopes versus printed-on text. You may find the uptick in open rates worth the time of hand addressing some of them. After all, it doesn't have to be your handwriting. Consider a project like this for when the office or phone staff have gaps in their schedule.

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CHAPTER 17: ON THE JOB SITE AND AROUND

Vehicle Lettering

You're driving around all day from job to job. You park the company vehicle at swanky homes around town. Right? Right! Capitalize on this, and use it as a direct way to market your services.

In my company, vehicle lettering was responsible for hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in revenue. Think about that. Hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of appointments scheduled per year, all from vehicle lettering.

Keep in mind we had fifteen trucks on the road, but it's all relative. If you have a lettered vehicle designed for response, you're going to book jobs.

If you're just starting out and testing the waters, this isn't as important. If you do this full time or intend to make a career out of this, invest in professional lettering.

Professional vehicle lettering will usually pay for itself in the first six months or so of having it. From that point on, it's all profit.

Your vehicle lettering should have your logo, phone number, and the services you offer. The logo is the least important part. Consider having the main service you offer and your phone number as the focal point.

In addition to lettering the sides of the vehicle, you should also do the back. When you are in traffic, potential customers sitting behind you will see it and take action.

17 • On the Job Site and Around

Professional wraps are nice, but they can be expensive. You can get by with simple vinyl-cut lettering. You can also start out and test the waters with some simple magnetic lettering. My vehicle had magnetic lettering for years. The vehicle was mine personally, so I could just peel the letters off if I wanted to.

In the spring, I would coordinate our efforts each morning. The goal was to have all the trucks go to the gas station together in an attempt to get noticed. In certain towns, we would also try to fill up at certain gas stations at the same time. It delivered a powerful marketing message. Potential customers would see a fleet of lettered, neat, and clean vehicles all fill up simultaneously. This was even more powerful when we coordinated in our best and most profitable towns.



We didn't do all that work in the same town as our office, so it wasn't always easy to pull off. But when we could, it was powerful, and it got the phone ringing.

Company Shirts

I'm sure you already have some company shirts made up. If not, get on it. They are an affordable way to add some professionalism to your company.

You can do a simple, standard T-shirt design in your company

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colors. Or you could step it up to some nice collared shirts. I would recommend this if you have employees. It's a nice way to keep everyone looking neat and tidy.

If you have employees, and they are uniformed, you can bring in a lot of

work just from getting seen around town. If they stop to do a quick storefront location or are even grabbing a bite to eat at a local deli, they will get noticed. And you will get calls from it.

Make sure your employees always have two shirts with them: a door shirt and a work shirt. This allows them to have one to work in and one to be presentable in.

Have them wear the door shirt when they introduce themselves to the customer, at the job site, and when wrapping up the job. Also, have them wear it when they are around town as they grab lunch or do an estimate.

Tip: Get a bunch of standard T-shirts printed with your company logo and contact info on the back. Give them out as gifts at local eateries to the counter help and servers. If they aren't required to wear a uniform, they will love your free T-shirt. They will likely wear it to work, and your prospective customers will likely see it. This is especially effective when done in your absolute best towns. It's an affordable way to give you great visibility to your target market.

Yard Signs

You have seen them before; they're everywhere! Jammed at the corner of busy intersections and around town on telephone posts—you can't miss them. I'm not suggesting you do that and spam them all over the place. But I am recommending you make ten to twenty of them and use them strategically. When you pull up to a job site and unpack, make it standard operating procedure to put one out by the street. Of course, you should always ask the customer first. Over the years, I have had only one client tell me that she would prefer I didn't put the sign out. I totally understood and said, "No problem." Side note: It was the wife of the quarterback from the New York Giants. I get why she didn't want the attention on her house. Be classy with yard signs. Don't jam them all over the place, and they will bring you work.

WINDOW CLEANING

862-266-0677

spartawindowcleaning.com

*We offer the best job in town.
When your looking for a
company that deivers give us
a call.*

SPARTA
WINDOW CLEANING

**WINDOW
CLEANING**
862-266-0677

spartawindowcleaning.com

Here is an example of a great yard sign.

Here is an example of a bad yard sign.



PSD - Yard Sign Window Cleaning

Think about how people will see the sign. Nobody is going to be walking by it. They are going to be driving by it, likely at a high rate of speed. There's no space or time for your branding, just the service you offer and your phone number. You could also maybe squeeze your website URL in there if it's short enough.

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Tip: If you have an excellent customer whom you have a good relationship with, and they happen to love clean windows and live in a great location, consider a barter. We had three great customers over the years whom we worked out a sign deal with. We would do their windows quarterly for free. In exchange, we had a permanent advertising location on their lawn. The situation was just right; all three of them lived in a great location on a corner lot in one of our best towns. I never would have thought this would work. In fact, one of the customers had suggested it to us, and it did work. She got her free window cleaning every three months. We got prime-time advertising real estate in a desirable neighborhood. We even would change the sign out once a month to a different color variation and service. What we changed it to depended on the season. I would never have thought of this myself.

Business Cards

Always have them. It almost seems stupid to talk about, but never have fewer than fifty business cards in your possession. How many places can you hand them out and leave them behind? Make sure your employees are always well stocked with them, as well. If your vehicle is lettered up, or if you're working in public, people are going to ask you for a card. It would be silly not to have a nice one to give them.

Make a game of it. How many can you give out in a day? Mathematically, the more that you put out there, the more leads and inquiries you're going to get. Have them in your front pocket always.

17 • On the Job Site and Around

Do you stop at the same deli every morning for coffee? Will they let you leave a neat little stack of business cards on the counter? I bet they would. Do you have some storefront clients you do work for on a regular basis? I bet you 90% of them would let you leave a little pile on their counter, too.



Just finished a job? Great. Leave ten cards on the customer's counter.



PSD - Business Card Download

Aside from the basic contact info for your company, consider putting an offer or ad right on the card. A great one is X number of windows cleaned for X dollars. Give the customer a reason to call you over the competition. Make it easy.

Gift Cards

These things are great. Consider having some printed. You have seen them before; they are thick cards made of hard plastic and kind of look like credit cards.



You can do something as simple as this:

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PSD - Gift Card Download

I would recommend making them for at least \$25 off any service. Note in small print that they are not combinable with any other offer you might be running. They look cool, customers appreciate them, and they have a great perceived value. We used to get these printed one thousand at a time and give them out all over the place. We would give a couple to customers upon job completion and also give them instead of business cards to people. And we would even leave them on the counter at delis and local eateries. Consider them a standard tool to use, and always have them with you, just like a business card. Be sure, however, that the \$25 discount will be tolerable within your pricing structure.

The Five-around Concept

Have you heard of this? It's straightforward, and it works. This is one of the absolute best things you and/or your crews can do. Here's how it goes:

You complete a job in a neighborhood. Then, immediately advertise your services to the five homes to the right and the five homes to the left. You can use a flyer or a direct mail piece. I prefer the flyer in this case because it's immediate.

Have it say something, such as the following:

"Hi there! We just completed some work right next door to you. Your neighbor is absolutely thrilled with her clean windows, and we think you will be, too. Go check them out! And by the way,

17 • On the Job Site and Around

here is a price for cleaning your home based upon what we are seeing from the street.” This is effective and works on many levels.

You have the keeping-up-with-the-Jones theory: “Oh, Mary got her windows cleaned? Dang. We have to get ours cleaned now.”

Social proof: “Mary used them, and I can walk over and see the results? They must be good!”

Here is a great example of an effective five-around flyer we used for years:



PSD -Sparta Window 5 Around BW Flyer

Window Cleaners Marketing Blueprint

I like this one because it allows you to show right on the front how affordable it would be to get this work completed.

Door Knocking

It's not for me, but it does work. This ranks up there with putting a door hanger on someone's house. I feel as if it's an invasion of privacy and personal space because you're selling something. I don't mind if someone comes on my property for a religious presentation or to sell me Girl Scout cookies. But I would be annoyed if someone knocked on my door to sell me landscaping or window cleaning services. But hey, that's just me, and I do know this is a viable method of gaining work, especially when you are just starting out. It's completely free and costs you only your time.

Supermarkets

We know women are your primary target audience. They typically do the shopping, and shopping usually happens at supermarkets. You have quite a few ways to advertise and market your services here. I'll go through a few. Some I have tried with success, others I never attempted.

At supermarkets, thousands of marketing messages are already bombarding potential customers. However, these people aren't primed or in the right mental condition to be receptive to your marketing message or offer.

Translation: They are there on other business. They are going to the supermarket with the sole purpose of shopping for food and

home necessities. It's not necessarily the appropriate setting to present your offer. But you know they are going to be there, so it couldn't hurt to give it a try.

Register Tape

You buy something, and you get a receipt. Flip that receipt over; sometimes it's blank, sometimes it has a coupon, and sometimes it has a little ad on it.

POWER WASHING
Any Size House
\$199.95

With this ad. Expires 7/31/07.
To ADVERTISE CALL 1-800-522-0506

All County Window Cleaning
(973) 827-8311
Fully Insured • Appointments Available
AllCountyWindowCleaning.com
We Clean Chandeliers Too!!

The Pond House
Water Gardens & Garden Center
265 Rte. 517 • Ogdensburg
973-827-2472
Fertilizer • Fertilizer
Seed • Mulch • Fertilizer
Fond Supplies • Soil
5% OFF ANY PURCHASE

With this ad. Expires 7/31/07.
To ADVERTISE CALL 1-800-522-0506

WANTED
Outside Sales / Advertising Sales Professionals
Do you think you could sell this advertising space to a local merchant for less than one penny per coupon?
Full and Part Time Positions are available
call Now
1-800-938-0098

All County Window Cleaning
(973) 827-8311
Fully Insured • Appointments Available
7 DAYS A WEEK
20 WINDOWS CLEANED
\$199.95
Standard 2 Pane Inside & Out
Includes Screens
With coupon expires 7/31/07.
AllCountyWindowCleaning.com
We Clean Gutters Too!!

FIF
First Interstate Financial Corp.
Licensed Mortgage Bankers
225 Sparta Ave, Sparta, (973)-729-8669
Fax (732) 460-7656 . e-mail joev@fifcorp.com

This intrigued me early on, and I decided to give it a shot. I tested it out in a few of our best big-money towns for a six-month period. After the trial period, and after we crunched all the final numbers, I decided to pull all ads except for those in one town.

This one town was one of our best, and we had a strong foothold there. We had a lot of other coordinated marketing efforts going on within that zip code. If we hadn't, I can't say for sure this strategy would have been as successful.

I suspect it went something like this: The potential customer gets our mailer and thinks about it. Then she sees our trucks driving around town and remembers our ad. She's shopping for groceries, gets home, reviews her receipt, and sees our

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ad. It all comes together, and she calls us. It was effective because it helped tie together all our other activities in that town.

The key is also that the marketing message goes home with the potential customers. They take it out of the store environment and bring it into their homes. They put it on the counter and look it over. Perhaps they research it. Thus, this method could make sense for you.

Community Board

This is a no-brainer, and it's free. Stick a flyer up whenever you can. You can also tack up some business cards and a brochure if you have them. Pro tip: Map out all the supermarkets in your area. Once a month, drive around and set up new flyers. Include delis and the like, as well. Map this out. See a more in-depth analysis of this in chapter 11, "Flyers and Door Hangers."

Two Other Options at the Supermarket

Supermarkets have other paid advertising options, but I recommend skipping them all. I will give you a brief overview and some rationale on why I would consider skipping them.

Shopping Carts

I've never tried them and am not sure I would. I'm not sure why; I just don't get a great feeling about them. Mainly, it seems to be a branding move as opposed to a way to make a direct offer. With the register tape and the community board, the potential

customer has an obvious way to take your info home. They can walk out with something tangible in hand.

Benches Out Front

I have the same thoughts about the benches. I don't think I would try them out. I do, however, know of a local plumber who claims success with them. I've talked to him about it a few times over the years because I noticed he's been running ads there for a long time. For him, it's a branding and top-of-mind thing. There's no offer, just a logo, a phone number, and a slogan. But he services one town and one city only. Everything he does is concentrated in one little area.

I believe it works for my plumber acquaintance because plumbing is a commodity, a distinct need at a particular time. Something breaks, gets clogged, or stops working, and you *need* to call the plumber; you don't *want* to call the plumber. You never really *need* to call a window cleaner; you *want* to call a window cleaner. Window cleaning is a luxury service, not a necessity like plumbing can sometimes be.

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CHAPTER 18: WORD OF MOUTH

Word of mouth is a form of promotion in which satisfied customers tell other people how much they like a business or service.

Word of mouth is awesome. You receive free referrals just for doing a great job. You can't beat that. You can't build a huge business from word of mouth, but you can certainly build a smaller, profitable one.

You can do some things to increase the word-of-mouth work you get. See the next chapter on referrals for more details. In my case, we were getting about 15% of our business from word of mouth, which was accelerated by our referral program and an ongoing planned strategy. We took every opportunity possible to leverage positive experiences into sales.

Most Valuable

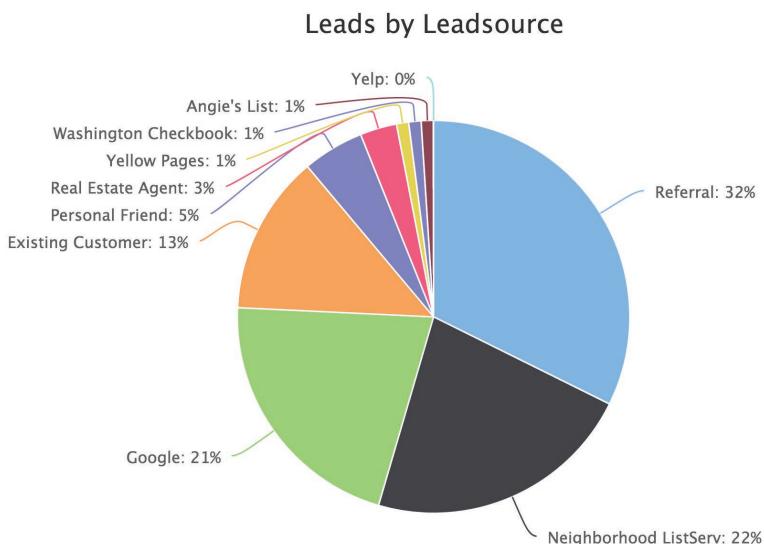
Word of mouth is the most valuable promotion tool, according to the Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA). Yes, that's a real thing! Can you believe it? There's a trade association for everything these days. Here are some stats from the WOMMA:

- 1) Word of mouth drives 13% of consumer sales.
- 2) Off-line word of mouth drives sales five times as much as one paid media ad.
- 3) Word of mouth amplifies the effect of paid media by 15%.

- 4) Consumers trust a friend's opinion over all other forms of paid advertising.

Check Out This Graph

This is an actual screenshot of my friend's ResponsiBid account. He is a window cleaner with two trucks on the road and no referral program in place. He does zero advertising, and it shows in his graph.



Let's break this down. During the time period of this graph, he got the following:

- 1) 62% of his work from word of mouth
- 2) 21% from Google SERP results

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- 3) 13% repeat clients
- 4) 4% miscellaneous sources

There is something awesome about that. Now, don't get me wrong, you're not going to start getting referrals like this right away. It takes a while to build up your pipeline of customers. But the takeaway is that if you always do a great job and go above and beyond for your customers, the referrals will come.

The Three-Step Plan

Here is my three-step plan for you to start getting more free word-of-mouth referrals right away. Your company has two types of encounters with your clients: on-site and off-site. Encounters occur on the phone or by e-mail while scheduling and while on the job site as you're completing the project. You can do any of these items in any order. Or do all three at the same time for maximum effectiveness.

Step 1) Make a Connection.

People like people who are like them. Find a way to relate to your client in conversation. It can be something you notice during the phone call with them or something you already know about them according to where they live. Or it could be something you've spotted around their house. Find anything possible to connect with them.

On the phone, mention something about their neighborhood, maybe another project completed nearby. On the job site, it's

even easier. Talk about something from their home you know they value. Do they have a boat outside? Talk to them about how much you like fishing. Talk about anything; just make some sort of connection.

Step 2) Wow Them.

Go the extra mile and do something they don't expect. You could toss in a window for free or polish their light fixtures as a thank you. You could remember some intimate detail about their life. Heck, you could even remember their dog's name and bring him a treat. You could leave them with a Starbucks gift card or bring them a baked good. This can be anything outside the normal service call. Surprise them in some small, positive way, and they will most likely talk about it.

Step 3) Bake It Into Your Business Processes.

Don't leave this to chance. If you want to bring in a consistent word-of-mouth workflow, plan and budget for it. This is especially important if you are not on the job site yourself. Make it part of the on-site process, built into the supervisor's on-site duties.

Make it part of his checklist of things he must complete on-site to consider a job complete. Maybe you have a line in your CRM or on your customer paperwork to capture the pet's name. Maybe you have your supervisor armed with gift cards. Or maybe you just ensure he does one thing on each job site that is above and beyond the call of duty.

Whatever it is, you should make it a planned routine that must happen at each job. I promise that if you do, it will come back to

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you in spades. Consider the extra money spent or the extra time used on-site as an investment in your business's future.

After some testing, you will likely come up with a short list of easy, guaranteed ways to wow the customer. You want to make the whole experience automated and impressive. Hone in on those ways and then narrow them down to three, two, or maybe just one. If you have one thing and do it regularly, it will be much easier to ensure success.

It's important to get this effort to the point where it's actually a system and not a one-time win. Make it more about the process and less about the generosity—although the customer's perception should be the opposite.

LISTSERVs

These were not on my radar, but they are worth mentioning. As you can see by the graph, my friend got a staggering 22% of his work from these LISTSERVs. These old-school e-mail lists are popular in some US neighborhoods where the homeowners use them to communicate with each other.

There is one e-mail address, and when someone sends an e-mail to it, the e-mail goes to the entire neighborhood. Homeowners use LISTSERVs to report break-ins, drug use, and other possible problems in the neighborhood. The owner of the graph tells me the LISTSERVs are also miniature recommendation engines. Someone in need of a service will fire off an e-mail asking for a good recommendation. It could be for a window cleaner or any other home service. It's a does-anyone-have-someone-to-recom-

mend type of thing.

The modern-day version of this is the neighborhood Facebook group. I have heard of and seen such groups popping up lately.

Social Media and Word of Mouth

Be sure to read chapter 7, “Social Media,” for the full details, but think about some instances of positive and negative word of mouth that have come to your attention recently. How many times have you heard friends on Facebook or Twitter complain about a product or company? I bet you have heard this quite a few times. Studies show that people are more likely to complain than compliment on social media. Think I’m kidding? Go to Twitter, look up one of your favorite brands, and put the word sucks after their name.

Furthermore, according to a survey by marketingcharts.com of one thousand consumers, respondents who experienced a bad interaction with a business were 50% more likely to share it on social media than those who had a good interaction.

To avoid being affected by these tendencies, keep these points in mind:

Step 1) Make sure you are always doing an amazing job. This will lessen the chances of any potential negative social media comments or complaints. If you mess up something, own it. Own it fast and fix it faster, but make it right at any cost.

Step 2) Leverage social media, if you can, to encourage positive

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word of mouth and reviews. Build positive reviews and comments from your customers right into your social media calendar. If a client is telling you how thrilled they are, don't be afraid to ask them to share their thoughts with the world.

“Oh, you’re thrilled with the service, Miss Smith? Well, please do tell your friends. We are a small family business that gets a lot of our work from word of mouth. The best way you can say thanks to us is to tell your friends and family about your experience.”

In Summary

Always do the best job imaginable and find a way to wow your customer. People are going to talk. You may as well control the conversation to ensure there is a positive spin on everything.

As you can see by the graph, you can build a whole business from word of mouth alone, or you can use it as one part of your entire marketing campaign.

At first, you won’t be able to build a whole business this way. You don’t have enough people in the pipeline to generate the buzz needed to sustain such a campaign.

However, keep word of mouth in mind with every interaction you have with your customers. Every step of the way, think, “What will they tell their friends?” Preplan it in your favor, and build in purposeful interactions. Set up triggers to leverage word of mouth as much as possible. Make it intentional by design; don’t leave one bit of it to chance. But just keep in mind that it should

always look like it was by chance. Make the customers feel special.

More important than anything else, put yourself in your customers' shoes. If you had someone working at your house—a landscaper, gardener, pressure washer, whatever—what are some things they could do to really wow you? What little thing could they do to impress you so much that you would go out of your way to tell your friends about it?

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CHAPTER 19: REFERRAL SYSTEMS

A happy customer tells a friend; an unhappy customer tells the world.

—Anonymous

We have all heard that quote before, and it's true, especially today. With the Internet and social media, word spreads fast. The obvious takeaway from this is that you should always do a 110% outstanding job all the time. Don't slip up, and be on point. Always assume the word of your work and customer experience is up for critique by the world.

The not-so-obvious takeaway is what great news this is. Leverage this to your advantage, and create an incredible referral system for your clients.

Benefits—Why They Are Awesome

Referrals always convert higher. When a client refers you to a friend or colleague, the friend or colleague is presold. The client would not have passed your info along if they didn't have a great experience with you. When the friend or colleague calls you, they are not calling to inquire about your services. They are calling to schedule your services.

They are also likely not price shoppers or hagglers. Chances are that what you charged was part of the initial discussion between them and your client.

And, of course, a referral is low or no cost. Aside from a thank

you and maybe a small gift, a referral is always free.

Two Types of Referrals

The first type of referral is a one from a strategic partnership. Please see chapter 19, “Networking,” which dedicates a whole section to the topic.

The second type of referral is from a customer to friends, family, or colleagues. These are great. If you make sure you always do a great job and that people are happy, these referrals will come in organically. It’s a given that you will get some work this way. Ordinary companies leave it at that and take what work comes in.

Expert companies, on the other hand, toss fuel on the fire with an in-depth referral marketing plan. It’s so instilled into the way they do business that it’s not even on the marketing calendar. It’s built right into the internal business systems. Read along, and I will lay out for you the simple steps you need to ingrain one into your business. Once you’re finished, your business will be a referral machine that spits out leads on a daily basis.

But first, here are some tips. These should be a given, but I’m going to mention them anyway. To ensure you are always referable, make sure that you always do the following:

- 1) Always be awesome. Do an excellent job always, and deliver more than you promise.
- 2) Wow customers! Aside from going the extra mile, surprise them in some way.

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- 3) Be consistent. Deliver a consistent experience to your clients. Do things the same way each time. Predesign the whole customer-interaction process to deliver the same results always.
- 4) Turn customers into advocates. When you treat someone the right way, they will go out of their way to tell the world how awesome you are.
- 5) Remove the guilt. Ask for referrals in a way that doesn't make customers feel like salespeople.

Your Precrafted Referral Strategy

Ask and Reward

Have a page on your website about referrals. Mention that referrals are important to you and your business.

Don't mention any monetary exchange for a referral. Just mention that referrals are important and that they help keep your prices low. Mention that the greatest way to say thank you isn't by telling you, it's by telling a friend. That's it.

Ask for Them Five Times

Five times? Really? That sounds like a lot. It is, but if you do it correctly, it won't seem like overselling; it will seem helpful. Here's how you do it:

- 1) Ask at first contact. Why not ask when the client calls you for the first time? You don't need to come right out and ask. But

you can mention on the initial call that you do offer a neighbor discount. Maybe someone on their street wants to book at the same time?

Build this right into your phone scripts. Make it part of the process.

2) Ask when they book the appointment. “OK, thanks, Miss Smith. We will see you Tuesday afternoon. Don’t forget, we do offer a neighbor discount. If you know someone who wants their windows cleaned the same day, just let us know.”

3) Ask after the job is complete. As you are wrapping up the job, build a referral request into your postjob wrap-up procedures. Just as you should have procedures in place for cleaning up a job site, you should have a procedure in place for you or your crew leader to ask your satisfied customer for a referral. This is the best time to ask. Customers should be at peak happiness from the amazingly clean windows.

4) Ask in the follow-up call. Yep, always do a follow-up call. It’s great quality control, but it’s also another opportunity to ask for a referral.

5) Ask on the follow-up postcard. Yes, you’re going to follow up again. Clients will tell you more on a postcard than they will to your face or over the phone. Postcards are essential for quality control, customer service, and asking for another referral.

Track, Measure, and Pay Out

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You should be keeping track of the lead source of every person who schedules an appointment. This will allow you to know on a day-to-day basis who is and who isn't referring work to your business.

Pay them out! When someone refers someone to your company, and you schedule and then complete the work, thank that referer with a gift and a note. Have a stack of ten handwritten thank you notes and ten \$25 gift cards in your office at all times.

When you complete a job from a referral, send the thank you note and gift card right away. Immediately after job completion, have a process in place to trigger the delivery.

Thank the referer profusely. Did they refer you two people? Send the referer two \$25 gift cards. Send one out for every single job booked. I promise that if you make this a practice, your referrals will skyrocket. You'll have more work than you know what to do with. Keep paying out your referrers over and over again.

Do not send them a gift certificate for your service. Send them a real gift card from a favorite local restaurant or Starbucks or maybe even for wine.com. Amazon and Best Buy are also great options. Tailor what you send to the client and their demographic. This is not a bribe; it's a sincere thank you from the bottom of your heart.

I have also experimented with other variations of this, such as refer five people and get a free service, or refer us X clients and get your next cleaning free. But nothing has proved to work better and foster more referrals than a \$25 gift card. The whole key is to make it something they will appreciate. Make it special.

Automate The Process

The steps involved in producing the referrals must be part of your company's DNA. Hardwire them into your company culture and systems. All facets of your business should touch this.

- 1) Sales team—The process is built into their scripts and is part of the system.
- 2) On-site crew—As with the sales team, it is built into the process.
- 3) Finance—They track the referrals and authorize the disbursement.
- 4) Marketing—They send the thank you letters.

If you set it up as part of the process and bake into it what you do, the whole program will take on a life of its own. You can bring in a nice amount of work from referrals. And you can bring in even more by systemizing and incentivizing it.

Watch the Trends

On a monthly basis, do a more in-depth analysis of your revenue report sorted by the campaign. Highlight your top referrers. Stay in touch with them more often, and give them deeper discounts in the future. Befriend them on social media, and stay in contact with them as often as possible. Engage with them, and maintain the bond. Continue to thank them and appreciate them, and the referrals will continue to flow in.

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The Super Rich

Do you want really rich customers? The super-high-end customers are going to be completely immune to most forms of advertising you throw at them.

They are not going to respond to your direct mail piece, and they aren't going to call you because they saw your yard sign.

But they will call you on a referral from a friend. Realistically, someone on the super rich person's staff is going to call.

With this type of clientele, a referral is going to be your only way in. Referral programs and precrafted strategies aren't going to work with these people or cause them to go out of their way to refer you. They operate on a different level from you and me. You just have to be likable and do a phenomenal job. You have to deliver them a great experience. Remember that the next time you score one of these jobs. Go the extra mile with these people. Pamper them, baby them, and give them a tremendous experience. And if you do, they will refer you to their other wealthy friends.

CHAPTER 20: NETWORKING

I'm not a fan of traditional networking methods. It's not in my personality, but many swear by them, and they do work. Like anything, you get what you put into it.

BNI Groups

Business Network International (BNI) is self-described as the world's largest business networking organization in the world.

With over 180,000 members worldwide, BNI generated 6.6 million referrals last year alone. That resulted in \$8.6 billion worth of business for its members.

BNI has local chapters all over the world. Members get together once a week, usually for breakfast. They meet, talk, and make a commitment to send each other referrals and work. They allow only one service provider from any given field to take part. So, if your local chapter already has a window cleaner, you would not be able to join. Membership is usually \$500 a year, and then you have the added expense of breakfast once a week.

My friend, who swears by them, told me this:

"BNI is a group of professionals meeting once a week at the same time. They are a tight-knit professional network of friends who refer business back and forth, all with the distinct goal of helping each other generate sales and revenue. It's like having a group of salespeople working for you whom you don't have to pay. It's completely referral based, and it's all about those rela-

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tionships. The reason you see each other each week is because that allows you to focus on and keep your company top of mind.”

The expense aspect isn’t a problem for me; rather, it’s more about the fixed weekly time commitment. Aside from attending each week, you also have to spend a considerable amount of time helping other members with referrals.

To me, it seems like the time could be better spent. If I used these three hours a week for something else, it would be easier and cheaper to generate an equal amount of work. But, hey, who knows? Many window cleaners swear by BNI.

Home Shows

Most local markets have one of these each year; our county has two. One is at a local high school, and another is at our fair-grounds. The one at the high school is pretty neat. It features local businesses from around the county and surrounding areas. Last time I checked, a booth was about \$750. These can be an excellent opportunity to meet with existing and prospective local customers.

Are home shows and garden shows right for you? I’m not sure. If you have one, and it’s in one of your best towns, it might be. Be sure to crunch the numbers and that it makes financial sense.

Keep the following costs in mind:

- 1) Entry fee: \$500–\$1,500.

- 2) The show setup fees and electricity. They usually charge extra for electricity after the fact. You're going to need it, so be sure to get the costs.
- 3) Professional booth design: \$1,000–\$1,500. But it's reusable. If you plan on doing these often, invest in a proper setup.
- 4) Staffing and labor costs.

Do Your Research

- 1) Be sure you ask about the traffic. How many people (prospective customers) attended last year?
- 2) Who usually exhibits? Get a list of last year's vendor attendees, if you can. It's likely listed on their website, if they have one for the show. Are your competitors there? If so, can you outdo them? Can you put together a better look and feel in comparison with them? If you're convinced you cannot, should you go anyway?

Cover Your Costs

If you do it, be sure you have the ability to schedule customers right on-site. Also, offer a giveaway of your services. Do this through a random drawing, and assimilate the leads you collect into your database. After the show is over, do a mailing to any leads you collected from people who did not schedule with you. Consider offering them a specific coupon or special, and be sure to mention how nice it was meeting them.

We were never able to schedule enough work at one of these to

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pay directly for the costs of attending. But we usually were able to make it worthwhile on the back end. We made it back with remarketing to the attendees who entered our drawing or signed up for more information. The back-end sales usually ended up being four to one over the on-site sales.

It's All About the Staffing

Give great consideration to the staffing of your booth. You have to have the right personality for this. If you're a friendly, upbeat person, you will be fine. I would recommend that you, as the owner, attend and make sure everything goes off without a hitch. Whom you put in this booth is the most important aspect of the whole thing. They have to be neat, clean, friendly, and knowledgeable about your company and service. Most importantly, though, they need to be approachable.

They have to exude positivity, friendliness, and approachability.

Think about it from an attendee's perspective. You're browsing around, walking down the aisles. You pass by one booth that's staffed by a person sitting on a stool, looking down at their phone unenthused.

Then you pass by another booth, and a friendly, smiling face greets you with an introduction. This person proactively engages you in conversation. Whom are you more likely to stop and talk to? If you're in the market for a home service, whom are you more likely to use? If you can't be there yourself with an assistant, be sure the person you send is a great representative of your company.

Always have someone there to help and talk to additional people who stop by. If people are not stopping by, you will have to get out into the aisle and start conversations with passersby. Make sure your assistant or representative can handle that.

Invite attendees into your space. Start with a general conversation or information about a giveaway you are doing. Don't talk about your service unless they ask. Talk about them, and open with some small talk.

Booth Design

Here is an example of a great trade show booth:

It has all the necessary elements. You have the backdrop, the side display, and the literature stand. This is a good setup. It's warm and inviting, and the literature stand is a nice touch.



It gives your potential customers the opportunity to step into the booth and have a conversation. They can also take home some literature and an advertisement for your company.

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You don't need to have something this elaborate, but a nice professional design will usually pay for itself. Give strong consideration to this if you think you have a lot of these shows in your future.

Data Collection

In an ideal world, you would make a connection to and have a conversation with all attendees who come through. But that's not ever going to be possible. Do try to meet as many people as you can, and do collect as much data from them as you can. But also have things in place to collect information. There will be times when you and your assistant get wrapped up in conversations. You want passersby to still be able to get your materials and leave their data.

If you have an iPad, consider bringing it and using it to collect leads. MailChimp has a great free app called Chimpadeedoo, which collects e-mail addresses. You can set it up to have people opt into a giveaway with it. Their e-mail address will automatically go to your new "home show list." You can also use a Google form and a laptop. That will get all your collected data into one neat spreadsheet for review after the show.

Do a Giveaway

What to give away? I think a free, complete home service could be good. I have also seen iPads used as trade show giveaway gifts. I mean, who doesn't like an iPad? Even if you already have one, you'd take another, as it has value. You'll have to decide what to give away; just be sure it's a cost-effective and highly desired item. It comes down to giving something away that you

think will drive the absolute most sign-ups. Of course, you want to remarket to them later. What's the hot gadget this year? Maybe that's what you want.

Distribute Literature

What type of literature to have? Think business cards, trifold brochures, refrigerator magnets, and maybe a recent direct mail piece.

Add a candy bowl or mints, as well. Standard giveaways include promotional items like company-branded pens, water bottles, and key chains. However, I'm not a fan of those; they seem tacky and overused.

I have also seen window cleaners take it a step further and enhance their booth with audio and video. If you have a great video about your company or even a YouTube video, you may consider setting that up on rotation.

I've also seen booth setups with a demonstration window. Staff it with a window cleaner, and show people how the process works. I'm not sure either of these two extra items will help with converting attendees into customers, but they are worth mentioning for your consideration.

Most importantly, go in with a plan. Go in knowing your costs and what you need to make to recoup them. You likely won't do it on-site, but you can on the back end.

What else do you want to accomplish there? Connecting with existing clients is a good one. It's nice to reconnect and often meet

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them for the first time in person. They may know of you and your staff only from over the phone. I have often met customers I have talked to only over the phone or through e-mails for years. It's nice to finally make a real connection and put a face to the name. It can help solidify the relationship.

Strategic Alliances

A strategic alliance is an agreement between two or more parties to pursue agreed-upon objectives, all while remaining independent organizations.



Sheet - Strategic Alliance Tool

With this definition, it's safe to say we can consider a strategic alliance a form of networking. This can be perfect when you share a group of potential customers with another noncompeting service provider.

Window cleaning companies could align with the following types of companies:

House cleaning services, glass installers, landscapers, pooper-scooper companies, maintenance companies, etc. You get the idea.

To get started, create a list of potential alliances in your service area.

1) Make a big list, and find five different companies in ten dif-

ferent verticals.

- 2) Tabulate all their contact information in a spreadsheet.
- 3) Research them a bit; read their reviews.
- 4) Narrow down your list to one or two professionals in ten verticals.
- 5) Reach out to them with an introductory e-mail.

It can be a simple e-mail, and it can go something like this:

“Hi, Mike. My name is Chris from Sparta Window Cleaning. My company gets requests for recommendations for the service your company offers. We are not interested in providing this service. But we would like to have a reputable local company to recommend to our clients. If you have any interest in this or would like to chat, please let me know. My number is 862-266-0677, or I can also reach out to you. Thank you very much, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.”

It's superinformal and the start of a friendly conversation. Have a meeting with Mike, and confirm his company would be a good fit for an alliance. If so, work out a deal where you will attempt to refer work back and forth. Take a few hundred of his business cards, and give him a few hundred of yours.

From there, all you need to do is rinse and repeat. Keep reaching out to people until you have a solid list of referable companies. Put them on your e-mail list—a “special segmented list,” of course. And stay in touch with your alliances on a regular basis.

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Keep track in your CRM of how much work you receive from each of the alliances. Put in a special campaign code so you can pull a report at a moment's notice. Also, consider getting together once or twice a year with your alliances. Reinforce the relationship over a coffee, and talk about ways you can refer each other more work in the future.

I used this marketing method for many years. A local cleaning company was the first to reach out to me. Over the years, we ended up recommending hundreds of jobs back and forth. This led to me setting up many other similar relationships. Build this into your marketing plan, and take regular action to set up relationships. It will prove to be a great and long-lasting form of referrals to your business.

Strategic Alliances Expanded

Consider taking your strategic alliances a step further. Create a great core group of business friends in parallel yet complementary businesses.

Let's say you have a great relationship with a local landscaper and cleaning company. Consider doing some co-opt advertising. Take yourself and two other companies and go in on the price of a direct mail campaign. Create and send out the piece to the shared database of all three companies. This can work and create a great synergy.

Pros:

- 1) Expand your reach and potential customer base.

- 2) Reduce the cost of marketing.

Cons:

- 1) You have to have a great and trusting relationship with the partner companies.
- 2) You have to trust that they will treat your customers as well as or better than you would.
- 3) You have to trust that this company has no plans in the future to get into your space and compete against you.
- 4) Your brand message can get a little mixed up when crammed on a direct mail piece with three or four other companies.

There are two different ways to do it:

- 1) Split the card with three other companies, and you each subsidize 25% of the total cost.
- 2) Split the card with four other companies and charge each of them 25% of the total cost. This will get your message out for free, but you will have to handle all the legwork. Coordinate the companies creating the offer, and do the artwork. You will also have to prep the data and handle the ordering and mailing.

The whole trick is forming your circle of highly trusted, like-minded business owners. They are out there; you just have to find them and make the connection.

Window Cleaners Marketing Blueprint

Cross-promotion Offers

Send an e-mail about these offers to your list, and your strategic alliance returns the favor. You can also do this with your mailing list and vice versa.

Be sure to control the communication and to keep your customers' data private. Do it in such a way that you're not handing over proprietary information. Institute a data-management policy to ensure sensitive data does not get abused.

CHAPTER 21: THE END + TOOLS AND DOWNLOADS

Get Into It!

So, there you have it, the official *Window Cleaners Marketing Blue Print*. I hope you find this information useful in the marketing of your business. When I first started, resources like this book and other forms of online learning did not exist. I wasted thousands of dollars on trial and error-type experiments, but you don't have to.

If you commit to the principles in this book, you can accelerate the growth of your business and maximize your earning potential. Follow my step-by-step instructions, and you will have a tremendous advantage over your competition.

Don't put this on the shelf and forget about it. Take action now. Turn off the TV, eliminate distractions, and get to it! Your business will thank you for it.

Please remember:

- 1) Don't overspend.
- 2) Test, test, test.
- 3) Use the templates.
- 4) Start now!

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Free Google Products

Get a Google Account here: - accounts.google.com/signup

Use the Google Cloud here: - google.com/drive

Use Google Spread Sheets here: - google.com/sheets

Use Google Documents here: - google.com/docs

Google Analytics – google.com/analytics

Google Webmaster Tools / Search Console – google.com/webmasters/tools

Google Forms - google.com/forms

Google Page Speed - developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed

Website Tools

Awesome Screenshot - awesomescreenshot.com

QuickCast - quickcast.io

WordPress Testimonials Widget - wordpress.org/plugins/testimonials-widget

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Kraken - kraken.io

Pingdom Page Speed - tools.pingdom.com

Moz Title Tag Tool - moz.com/blog/new-title-tag-guidelines-pre-view-tool

Awesome Websites - hatchspot.com

Website Live Chat - zopim.com

Facebook Business - facebook.com/business

Google Business - google.com/ads

NiceWork - hatchspot.com/nicework or nicework.io

Automation

Zapier Data Automation – zapier.com

Collect Data

Chimpadeedoo - App Store

Email Marketing

Mailchimp – mailchimp.com

Write Better

Grammarly - grammarly.com

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Social Media Tools

Hootsuite - hootsuite.com

Buffer - buffer.com

Social Media Name Assistance - knowem.com

Cool Paid Tools

Google Apps for Work: apps.google.com

ResponsiBid – symplosize.com/responsibid

House Call Pro - tryhousecallpro.com/wcr

Interesting Websites

Business Terminolgy – entrepreneur.com/encyclopedia

WOMMA – Word Of Mouth Marketing Association – womma.org

Marketing Charts - marketingcharts.com

Listserv – lsoft.com

Neat Stuff For Five Bucks - fivver.com

Direct Mail

Melissa Data – melissadata.com

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Postal Service US – usps.com

SendJim - sendjim.com

Market Research

Census Data - factfinder.census.gov

Research Realestate - trends.findthehome.com

Research Addresses - melissadata.com/lookups/zipdistance.asp

Free Map Tools - freemaptools.com

Nielsen My Best Segments - segmentationsolutions.nielsen.com/mybestsegments

Survey Monkey – surveymonkey.com

Phone Marketing

Text Message Marketing - mozeo.com

Put A Voice Mail On A Phone - slybrodcast.com

Professional Voice Work - voicebunny.com

Stay Up To Date SEO Blogs

searchenginejournal.com

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moz.com/blog

searchenginewatch.com

My Websites

TheWCRA - thewcra.com

ThePWRA - thepwra.com

The Huge Convention – thehugeconvention.com

Home base – windowcleaner.com

WCR Forum - windowcleaningresource.com

PWR Forum - pressurewashingresource.com

Sparta Window Cleaning - spartawindowcleaning.com

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Thanks for Reading. I hope you enjoyed it! 😊

If your interested in more in-depth assistance with marketing your window cleaning business please visit WindowCleaner.com/Chris.