



By Barbara Walsh

How much work do you want?

Why every painting contractor needs an integrated marketing plan.

As a painting contractor, a lot of your work probably comes from referrals. Referral marketing is the best type of marketing because your happy customers have already done a lot of the work for you. Of course it's up to you to close the deal with your professional written proposal, price, and your personality. And yes, your professional appearance and personality is another major determining factor in getting hired—but that's a topic for another time.

Since most people don't hire professional painting contractors very often, your past customers may not be referring you simply because they have forgotten about you. This may be because you have no digital marketing strategy to keep in touch. Referral marketing can dry up, leaving you with little or no work, which is

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the reason every painting contractor needs to have a marketing plan. It doesn't have to be elaborate, but it needs to be more than print advertising such as flyers, yard signs, logo t-shirts, business cards, and a couple of print ads in your local newspapers or magazines.

Incorporate multiple layers of digital marketing in your marketing plan.

Get a website

Today's professional painting contractor needs to have a website. Your website is your most valuable piece of real estate on the Internet. It is where you show and tell. You show your potential customers what you do through photo galleries and videos and you tell them how you can solve their problem. Make sure your website is about *them*, not you. Position your web copy to be customer-centered around a problem they may have and how you can solve it for them, and then show them your great work with visuals. Don't forget to include a customer reviews page (testimonials) to further your credibility and reputation.

Be active on social media

Social media is another avenue to help your company become more visible. Social media sites allow you to connect with your current customers, potential customers, business contacts and peers.

Through these social media communities you will gain brand awareness of your business, reputation as a professional, and possibly lead generation opportunities. Also, social media is another way to drive people to your website where they can learn all about your business and why they should hire you.

Internet business listing directories

There are a lot of business listing website directories where you list your business information and category of business. People go to these sites searching for goods and services and providers in their area. Just like the yellow pages, today's consumer looks for goods and services on the Internet, determining who they will call based on what they find. Will

they find your business?

Put up a blog

If you enjoy writing and telling stories about your industry, a blog on your website is a great way to increase SEO (search engine optimization) of your website plus it provides beneficial content to your readership. Having a blog is a way to show people you understand their problems, know how to solve them, and provides the benefit of positioning yourself as a leader in your industry.

Creating an email marketing list

Most of your customers probably use email. Start capturing their email addresses by either 1) asking them for it, 2) placing a line in your contracts for it, and 3) have opt-in opportunities available on your website and social media platforms. Email marketing is a great way to provide useful information to your customers while keeping your name in front of them. It doesn't have to be time-consuming or elaborate. You

can consider weekly, monthly or quarterly e-newsletters that highlight any new blog posts you've written, other useful D.I.Y. information, and any special offers you have in effect. Tailor the e-newsletter to the time of year and make it visually appealing and fun to read.

A few final thoughts.

None of the above marketing strategies are expensive. All have trackable analytics to help determine their effectiveness, but they do take time and a commitment of consistency to see results. If you don't have the time or office staff to implement some of these strategies on your

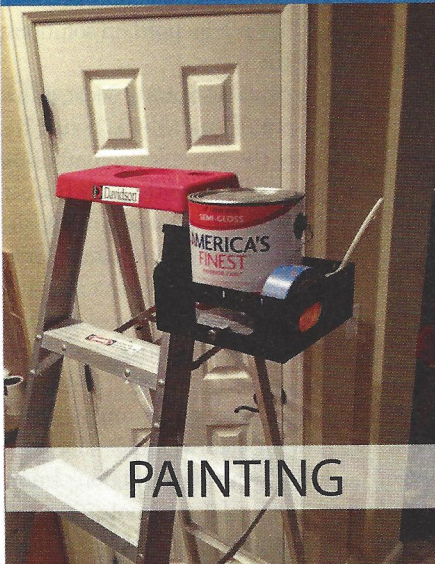
own, consider outsourcing to a marketing consultant. My company Walsh One Marketing will be happy to help!

I hope you can now see how having an integrated marketing plan that uses multiple layers of marketing (including digital and print) will grow communities of social media friends/fans, grow your brand awareness and reputation, and increase lead generation. Get found today and keep the phones ringing!

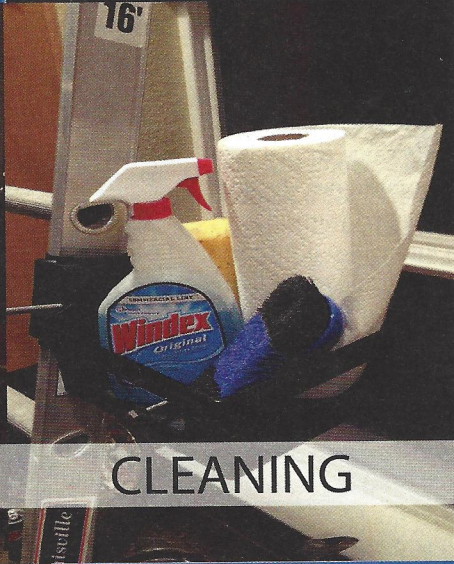
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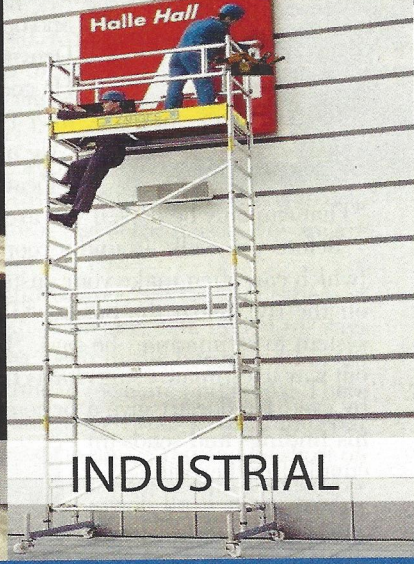
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