

Marketing Action Checklist

Following are some areas to consider when you think about developing a marketing program for your homebuilding business.

Remember, marketing is about developing a positive perception in the subconscious mind of the prospect **before the buying decision is made**. The prospect wants to know that your business is worthy of her consideration. The goal of a marketing program is to place your company "front of mind" when the prospective client thinks about building a home.

It is just as important to avoid a negative impression as it is to build a positive impression. That is why you want your marketing package (including your appearance, your quote, your sales presentation and even your vehicle) to be professional, logical, and tidy.

When you are in front of your prospect, you must exude competence and capability. Buying a house is a huge financial decision and commitment, and your prospect must feel that you appreciate the difficulty of the decision. Tell the prospect that you understand how careful they need to be, and you intend to give them all they need to make an intelligent decision, and that you hope the decision will lead to working together with them to build the house they want.

Review your current marketing efforts. Score yourself on each category.

- 1) **Doing it right**
- 2) **Doing, but need improvement**
- 3) **Should be doing this**
- 4) **Not right now**

Congratulate yourself on the 1's, then get to work on the 2's and 3's to beef up your marketing success. Keep the 4's in the back of your mind for later consideration.

Your Image

		(1) Doing It Right	(2) Doing, Need To Improve	(3) Should Be Doing	(4) Not Right Now
1. Business Name	Easy to pronounce; Unique; No negative associations ("Satanic Structures" or "Blackhole Builders").				
2. Positioning	Don't confuse your prospect. You can't be all things to all people - don't even try. Spend time defining and refining your niche.				
3. Color	Choose a color that will be your color. Work it into all promotions. Bright colors for young people -- muted, richer colors for older people. Customers unconsciously respond to your use of color.				
4. Logo	Simple shapes are recognized most quickly, and go deeper into the mind for better retention. Ovals are best, simple is best.				
5. USP - Unique Selling Position	No more than 7 words that say what you are about. Best is 3-4 words with emotional appeal. Leave the meaning a little fuzzy. "Quality is Job 1", "You're in Good Hands", "The Real Thing", "We Work", "Did Somebody Say McDonalds?", "We Cover the World", "From Chaos to Control".				
6. Reputation	Gives your prospects a conscious validation of the unconscious decision made on the basis of your image package. A good reputation will not necessarily be the deciding factor in a purchase decision, but a bad reputation will definitely work against you.				
7. Your Story	People respond to a story. What is it you do that nobody else does? What have you done that nobody else will do? Where did you come from? What sets you apart? "Why should I remember you?"				
8. Website	MUST HAVE. An electronic brochure. Use as a billboard on the information highway. Most people use the Internet to check on vendors prior to a purchase, especially a large purchase. If you are not here, it says negative things about your business. Too small, not keeping up with new developments, too cheap, etc.				
9. Column in a publication	Ask if your local newspaper would like a column on some aspect of home ownership. You're the pro.				
10. Testimonials	Ask happy customers to write letters and then frame the letters and put them on display. Include them in your promotional literature. Post them on your website. No marketing piece is stronger than a good testimonial.				
11. Word of Mouth	To get "word-of-mouth", your business must be "front-of-mind". You get there with a well-designed image package, superb service, and referrals.				
12. Website and Social Marketing	Use to establish your expertise. Use it as an electronic brochure. Studies show that appealing to the eye and the ear is 68% more effective than either alone. Add a YouTube video explaining why you use the floor system or the plumbing fixtures you do. Have a subcontractor talk about why he enjoys working with you and about the products or techniques used in his phase.				
13. Newsletter	Be the consultant and be helpful. The letter is not about you, it is about addressing the needs of your market niche. Each letter is self-contained and addresses on part of the home-building process. Distribute on a regular schedule. Post on your website, and archive past issues there.				

Your Presentation

		Doing It Right	Doing, Need To Improve	Should Be Doing	Not Right Now
14. Words Mean Something	When you are talking with your customers, use the words they <u>want</u> to hear. "Value", "Long-lasting", "Unique", "Safety", "Comfort"...depending on what your market research tells you they want to talk about.				
15. Consultations	Offer free, non-binding, consultation to prospects planning their own home -- "help you design to keep costs down... to increase your energy efficiency...to enable you to age-in-place..."				
16. Sales Presentation	Learn to use effective and emotionally-loaded words and phrases. "Secure", "I'll take care of it", "I know just what you mean", "Let me repeat that to make sure I am understanding you"...				
17. Sales Training	All employees and subcontractors need to know how you expect the customer or prospect to be treated. Don't assume your framer or roofer will be nice -- tell him how to talk to your prospect.				
18. Business Cards and Stationery	Your business card is a mini-brochure for your company. You aren't a snooty attorney. Stationery should be of appropriate quality and tone.				
19. Brochures	8 1/2" x 11", tri-fold. The story of the Company. Pictures and large typeface. Just to leave something with her after your meeting. Color printers and word processors make it easy.				
20. Yellow Pages	This used to be where people look first. Has been supplanted by the Web, but still important to show stability. Question large expenditures here. You may find that a small ad referring the prospect to your website is effective.				

21. Television/Radio Commercials	These are always expensive, but can be very effective if you hit your market niche. Using this channel requires lots of study of demographics. Don't use unless you are also prepared to commit to a backup plan using mailings, handouts, website tie-ins, etc. before, during and after the commercial campaign. Very powerful for establishing your position in the market.				
22. Tie-In With Other Merchants	You display their stuff, they display yours. Talk to furniture stores, shed manufacturers, garage storage companies...				
23. Reprints of Ads and Other Publicity	Make reprints of newspaper ads or columns you have written to be distributed. Put them on your website. You're the pro.				
24. Supplier's Ads	Ask suppliers for their brochures. Distribute to prospects - "This is the kind of quality we use in your house".				
25. Supplier Links	Put links to your suppliers on your website. Make it easy for the prospect to find out more about the products you use. Some suppliers will reciprocate by listing you on their site. Ask.				
26. Magazine Ads	Look at local or regional magazines. If there are ads for the products you use, copy the ad and use as a mailer or e-mail. "As seen in..."				

Your Product

		Doing It Right	Doing, Need To Improve	Should Be Doing	Not Right Now
27. Convenience	Make it easy for your prospect to get a bid, work with their lender, place the order, and complete all the myriad steps required.				
28. Speed	Delivery speed at each step in the process indicates your level of interest in pleasing your prospect. Respond quickly to their request for a quote. Have a schedule and stick to it for building the house. Get back to her quickly regarding change orders.				
29. Pricing	Studies indicate that only 14% of prospects say price is important. Pricing is probably even more important for the builder because of lender appraisal and lending guidelines. Build what your market niche can afford.				
30. Availability of Financing	Customers want the whole package. You will sell more homes if you have a relationship with a bank or mortgage broker which allows you to do the sale and the financing in "one-stop".				
31. Follow-Up	Let prospects know you are interested in building their homes. Don't let them fall through the gaps.				
32. Public Displays	Billboards, bus benches, taxicabs, coffee cups, caps, shirts, measuring tapes, balloons at public events, etc. The more off-beat and attention-getting, the better in this category.				
33. Take-One Boxes	Place in locations frequented by prospects. Absolutely have at your current job sites.				
34. Outside Signs	Put signs at your jobsites letting people know who is building this house. Also have a sign at your place of business, especially if you work out of your house, so prospects can find you easily.				
35. Gift Baskets	Include coupons from local merchants, especially your suppliers. Send to buyers within seven days of their move-in date.				