



Does Your Marketing Need a Remodel?

Self-Evaluation Quiz for your Contracting
or Home Improvement Business

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Does Your Marketing Need a Remodel?

OK... you're working hard to keep sales up during a down market. But projects are getting smaller, and new customers are harder to come by. Now for the test. Is your company doing everything it can do to get ahead?

Here's a quick self-diagnosis to help you determine whether your marketing program could benefit from a remodel.

Question #1

When business slows down, it's important to:

- a. Stay the course - keep doing what I've been doing
- b. Maintain or increase marketing expenditures, but re-evaluate how I'm spending to make sure I am getting the most bang for my buck.
- c. Cut all marketing expenses in order to lower costs.

Question #2

Building long-lasting customer relationships starts with:

- a. Finding those rare customers who know what it means to be loyal to their contractor.
- b. Reducing prices to stay more competitive and keep customers coming back for more.
- c. Earning loyal customers by demonstrating professionalism across all areas of the business.

Questions #3

Today, on average, the single most effective way to advertise locally is:

- a. Old faithful - the Yellow Pages.
- b. Canvassing neighborhoods door-to-door - nothing like that personal touch.
- c. Sending brochures to a rented mailing list.
- d. Local sites and search engines - where potential customers are looking for my services.
- e. Radio.

Question #4

Knowing that measurement is key to successful marketing, we make sure to:

- a. Ask our customers how they found us.
- b. Look at how many visits we're getting on our website.
- c. Track emails and calls from our website.
- d. All of the above.

Question #5

The best way to handle in-bound phone calls is:

- a. Take the call when I have time.
- b. Let the answering machine pick up so I can call back later.
- c. Treat each call with respect and urgency - it could be my next new customer on the line.

Question #6

Outside of providing great work and service, one of the best techniques for contractors to build trust amongst prospects is:

- a. Hosting a neighborhood cookout.
- b. Belonging to respected trade groups or organizations like the Better Business Bureau.
- c. Sponsoring a Little League team.
- d. Asking my friends and family members to put in a good word for me.

Question #7

The percentage of consumers who almost exclusively use search engines (vs. phone books) to find local products and services is:

- a. 15%
- b. 23%
- c. 37%
- d. 54%

Question #8

The biggest mistake contractors make in managing leads is:

- a. Launching one large campaign instead of pacing your marketing efforts, causing a sudden rush of activity.
- b. Having no tools in place to help manage incoming leads and ensure timely follow-up.
- c. Not using call recording technologies to track conversations with customers or prospects.
- d. Not training or evaluating the receptionist for his/her ability to further sell prospects on the benefits of the firm's services.
- e. All of the above.

Question #9

To retain hard-earned customers, it's a good idea that I:

- a. Send them all a Bundt cake over the holidays.
- b. Let them call when they need me again - better not to pester them for business.
- c. Lower my price the more work they give me.
- d. Keep in touch with them a few times a year, and show them that I value their business.

Question #10

The worst mistake I can make with my website is:

- a. Not making it clear what I want the visitor to do (i.e. request a free estimate)
- b. Not satisfying the informational needs of various types of visitors (i.e. project type, income level, budget range, etc.)
- c. Not optimizing my website based on customer feedback, new services and usage data
- d. All of the above.

ANSWERS

Question #1 - B. See 'down' as the new 'up'

When the economy slows, some companies get nervous and stop spending on advertising and promotion. But savvy marketers know that a housing downturn is a real opportunity to leap ahead of your competition - not by cutting back, but by spending *smarter*.

Questions #2 - C. Put your best face forward, earn their trust

Too many companies seem to forget the basics of good business, like being polite and courteous... providing accurate estimates... returning phone calls in a timely manner... The fact is, your overall professionalism is what serves as the foundation for building lasting customer relationships. It's what builds trust and earns you loyalty.

Question #3 - D. Be online

You know that your potential customers are using the Yellow Pages less - and searching the Internet more to find your services. That's why you've taken steps to get found, and are advertising on popular local sites and search engines.

Question #4 - D. Measure, measure, measure.

Asking your customers how they found you is always a good idea, and knowing how many site visits you had from a particular marketing initiative is a step further, but in order to really know your true return on investment, you need to invest in a tool that can truly manage your leads and consistently tell you through what channels your customers are coming to you from.

Question #5 - C. A missed call is a missed opportunity

You often only have one chance to sell in a new customer. So make sure to have staff available during business hours to pick up the phone or respond to an email in real time. Statistics show that if a potential customer is initially forwarded to a voicemail box, your chances of closing that customer are much lower.

Question #6 - B. Keep good company

Belonging to trade groups or organizations like the Better Business Bureau, and prominently advertising your affiliation, can bolster trust among potential new customers and help improve sales conversion rates. According to a recent survey

nearly 90% of Internet users are more confident buying from businesses that have a prominently displayed Better Business Bureau logo on their site.

Questions #7 - D. *54% of people have substituted online search for the phone book for local services!*

Believe it or not, 54% of consumers have completely replaced the phone book with online search engines. An even greater number (over 70%) report using online search to look for local services at least some of the time.

Question #8 - E. *Don't let your leads manage you*

Generating qualified inquiries to your business will get you close to success, but you or your staff will need to take it the last mile and close the sale. As you know, managing dozens of leads, following up and scheduling can be a challenge. However, when it comes to getting a return on investment for your marketing activities, sales effectiveness is critical...

Question #9 - D. *Treat customers as your strongest asset*

To earn a customer's repeat business, you need to earn their loyalty. So make a point of keeping in touch with them - at least twice a year - letting them know when you have something new to offer, such as a "special discount exclusively for our favorite customers." Make them realize that you value them and their business. Remember, they've done business with you once and, if you play your cards right, they'll be happy to do business again and again.

Question #10 - *Your website is too important to make these mistakes*

Help is available in the way of online marketing service providers that can ensure you're guiding as many people as possible toward calling or emailing your business. Unfortunately, most site-building tools and family members don't know how to create a site that does this, robbing you of customers that could have been yours.

Now score yourself:

8 - 10 Good work! You are one marketing savvy contractor!

5 - 7 You've got a decent start but could still use some improvement.

0 - 4 Emergency... seek a marketing remodel immediately!