

WORK STUDY › OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFIT

MARKETING



DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY TRAINING

WHAT MAKES YOUR BUSINESS SPECIAL?

What is it that you offer that sets your business apart from others?

Who are your ideal customers?

Does your business meet their needs?

Identify your market

Understand what your strengths are and what customers you want to attract. This could be commercial customers from a specific sector, or residential customers from a specific area. You cannot be all things to all people so it is important to identify your target market, understand their priorities and what it is that motivates them, so that you can communicate with them effectively.

Marketing plan

Marketing is not something that you should only do when business is slow; it is an ongoing process that helps to stop business from slowing down.

Ensure that you have a plan and that you are driving the business forward. Your plan should include:

- Your current marketing activities
- Your target audience
- Your objectives
- Your budget
- How you plan to achieve your objectives
- When you will review your plan

Remember: You cannot expect one piece of marketing communication alone to build your business. Often it takes many 'opportunities to see' (OTS) a brand before it is recognised by a customer and even more to encourage people to change their buying decisions and switch to your company. It is important to plan your marketing campaigns and follow them up.

Word of mouth

Don't underestimate the power of referrals. Good news spreads and people will often ask for recommendations from friends before making a buying decision. Ask your customers to write you a referral that you can display on your website, or leave you a review on Facebook, or a dedicated reviews platform such as Trustpilot or Reviews.co.uk.

Remember: Bad news often spreads quicker than good news, so try to deal with any customer service issues promptly. A bad review is not the end of the world, it shows that your company and reviews are genuine and how you respond to it often create a positive impression.

Trade Associations

Membership of trade associations show that you are a professional, qualified pest controller. It gives you credibility, promotes your training and puts you on a register from which potential customers can access your details.

Remember: You have worked hard to attain your training and qualifications so ensure that you promote this. Customers want to know that they are in safe hands.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 'FIRST IMPRESSION'

Have you ever taken a step back and looked at the experience your customers have when dealing with your company?

How can you possibly improve your service if you are not fully aware of what is important to your customers (not what you think is important to them) and how they perceive you.

Taking time to evaluate your business to ensure you are meeting, or even better, exceeding your customers' expectations is vital.

So how do you do this?

Think about your first impression

Your 'first impression' is not simply your appearance; it is the complete experience. What does your van look like? Is it clean, branded? What will you leave behind – a business card, a professional card on which you can write your quote or post treatment follow-up advice?

The difference between wearing a professional and if possible branded, clean uniform and turning up in dirty overalls can be the difference between winning a job and losing one. At first your appearance is often all customers can judge you on and if you look professional you will inspire respect and confidence. You could be the most capable pest controller but by neglecting your 'first impression' you will do yourself and your business a disservice.

The appearance of your van is also important. It can be interpreted as an indicator of your work ethic i.e. if you have a clean and tidy van, your work may turn out to be clean and tidy. A branded van can often make you appear professional, while at the same time also promoting your company.

You do not need to spend a 'king's ransom' on marketing materials but it is important you have a logo which you use consistently. This will establish your brand.

Your last impression – think about the things you leave behind

How do you deliver your quote? How do you tell people the many services that you offer? Do you have a business card that has your telephone number on it in case the customer should want to contact you again?

Perhaps the most useful thing to do is evaluate your 'first impression' regularly. Find out what is important to your customers and ensure that there are no areas of your business letting you down. This can be done by simply asking your customers for feedback, or taking a step back and asking yourself 'If a stranger turned up at my door looking like this what would I think?'



10 TIPS FOR BETTER BRANDING

Branding is about more than your company logo; your brand is also how you do business and is therefore your business identity. Here are 10 tips for better branding suitable for businesses of all sizes:

1. Keep it simple

A clean and simple logo design is a good place to start. Your logo can be just your company name, but it is good to have a graphic image to go with it. As well as looking professional, a logo helps customers recognise and remember your brand.

2. Complementary fonts and colours

Once you have your logo, pick one or two complementary fonts and colours to use with it. This can be as simple as always using Arial font in black or green on your website, leaflets and business cards.

3. Location is key

You have your logo, now what? You can put your logo on your van, your stationery, your business cards, your leaflets, your clothing, on bait boxes, on your building sign, on your website, the possibilities are endless!

4. Don't underestimate the small stuff

Try and reinforce your brand every time you communicate with a customer – use your logo on your email signature, and on your quotes and invoices. Hand out your business card and/or leaflets as much as possible – you never know who might recommend your business.

5. Be consistent

Use the same logo every time and try to avoid changing the font or colour or using more than one logo. Try to stick to your complementary fonts and colours in everything you produce. If you have changed your logo, be sure to phase out your old logo, even if it is a slow process.

6. Get everyone on board

Even if there is only one other person in your business, get them involved! Encourage technicians to wear branded clothing and leave behind branded business cards and leaflets. Office based staff should be using branded stationery. Ensure that everyone is using a standard company email signature.

7. Remember it takes time

Building your brand and creating brand awareness takes time. It might just take a while to get branded clothing, a branded van and a website – just do one thing at a time.

8. Stay up to date

Don't let your brand get stale. The information on your literature, website and social media profiles should be accurate and relevant, and the content regularly updated.

9. Use social media carefully

Facebook, X and LinkedIn are a great way to showcase the personality of your company and interact with customers, but keep your updates professional, relevant and true to the company's values.

10. Use a professional

If you want to try a more graphic logo design, marketing or graphic design agencies can design a logo for which you will then be free to use as you please. They can also design your website, stationery, leaflets and business cards.



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social networking enables you to connect, share and stay in touch with friends, colleagues, customers, suppliers, the local community, and even trade associations and government agencies. You can use social media sites to post updates, share pictures and videos and talk to contacts. Each social network varies in the type of content you can post and the groups of people you can connect with. Here is our guide to getting started:



Facebook

Facebook is the largest social network in the world with over 1 billion users. You may use Facebook in your personal life and not give it a second thought, however you can also use it for your business and post updates, including pictures, videos and links to other websites, and connect with customers, suppliers and potential new customers.

Getting started with Facebook...

1 Create a 'business page' for your company

Facebook requires businesses to use a Facebook business page. If you use a personal page for your business, this can be shut down. Use something easily recognisable as your profile picture – usually your logo. Using a strongly branded image of your premises, your team or your vans for your cover photo, creates a professional image.

2 Add a Facebook link to your website

This will help you to get more traffic to your Facebook page. You can also add a Facebook link to your email signature and add the Facebook icon to your leaflets and business cards.

3 Get people liking your page

When people like your Facebook page, your updates appear on their newsfeed. Writing your first post and finding things to say can be daunting. Try posting pest facts, interesting photos of things you've seen on the job (nothing sensitive), or articles about pests in the news. Get the conversation started in your community!

4 Keep up with the competition

Are your competitors using Facebook? You can learn from competitors with impressive Facebook strategies using the Pages to Watch feature. Just add 5 or more pages to see how your page measures up against the competition and compare their activity, engagement and audience growth to your own.

5 Drive more traffic to your website

Try to link back to your own website where possible in your posts. Not only will this improve your SEO (search engine optimisation), you might find some new customers too.





X

People use X to connect with others and discover new things. X is the home of breaking news, and you can be sure that as soon as something is happening, people are talking about it on X.

Getting started with X...

1 Set up a X account

Your X account username should be your business name so that people can easily find you, e.g. Killgerm. You can set your name to something more personal if you prefer, e.g. Dave @ Killgerm.

2 Get tweeting and join in the conversation

You can follow and send tweets to local businesses, fellow pest controllers, local authorities, trade associations, government agencies, anyone who can help your business and keep you informed. As well as joining in conversations you can retweet and share someone else's update with your own followers.

3 Keep it simple

You are limited to 280 characters per tweet, so keep your updates short, snappy and to the point. Because everything moves so fast on X you can post updates much more often, so if you have a lot to say, consider breaking it down into smaller tweets or linking to a blog post on your website.

4 What's trending right now?

The hashtag symbol # is used in tweets before a keyword. Hashtags categorise the tweet and help it show up in searches for that keyword. For example, you could use #pestcontrol in your tweets. Hashtagged words which become very popular become trending topics. If you click on a hashtag on someone's tweet, it will bring up all tweets containing that hashtag.

5 Add the X logo to your website

As with Facebook, adding the X logo to your website, business cards and leaflets will increase your followers and improve your SEO.

FOLLOW US...

There are many other social media sites that can be useful for your business. Understanding what is available and choosing which works best for you is the key.





LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network and provides immense opportunities to connect with the a huge online network of job seekers, employees, partners and more.

Getting started with LinkedIn...

1 Create a company page

To get started you need to create your company page. Add your company logo and description, not forgetting to mention what makes your business unique and stand out from competitors. Being on the LinkedIn network shows your customers that you are professionally minded.

2 Involve your team

A great way to increase your visibility on LinkedIn is to encourage your team to keep their profiles up-to-date and like and share your company's posts and profile. The ultimate goal is for people to start connecting and talking about your company.

3 Post often

Posting updates is the most effective way to start a conversation and buzz about your business. Share your company achievements, include images and videos to give your posts visual impact. Also, you should try to include a link back to your website to drive further drive traffic.

4 Write smart

When writing posts for LinkedIn, treat it just like you would your company website. By using the same tone and keywords as you would on your website you emphasise to your customers what your company specialises in and does well.

5 Utilise your personal page

There are many ways to promote your business further through your personal profile as well. You can endorse your connections, which means that you approve of, or acknowledge their skills or abilities. You can also write recommendations for your connections. This is a great way for you to showcase your business and your long-standing connections within the industry.

LinkedIn Showcase pages are an extension of your LinkedIn company page and allow you to highlight a particular service or brand. Although you need to have a company page to create showcase pages, they're somewhat of a standalone feature. Each showcase page has its own followers, status updates and functionality, like a mini LinkedIn company page.



LinkedIn Showcase Pages



Instagram

Instagram is an image sharing platform where people go to be inspired and discover new things. Over 95 million photos and videos are shared on Instagram every day.

Getting started with Instagram...

1 Create a business page

Instagram is owned by Facebook, so you will need a Facebook business page in order to create an Instagram account for your company.

2 Link to your website

Instagram allows clickable links to be included in the bio section, so make sure that you include a link to your website.

3 Create content

Instagram encourages user-generated content. This is content that you have created yourself. It could be a picture that you have taken or an informational graphic that you have designed.

4 Take advantage of Instagram apps

Instagram has a suite of useful apps including Hyperlapse which lets you create moving, handheld time lapses that result in a cinematic look, quality and feel, Boomerang which creates captivating mini videos by taking 10 photos, stitching them together and then looping them into a video and Layout which lets you create one-of-a-kind layouts by remixing your own photos and then sharing them on Instagram.

5 Use hashtags

Using relevant, targeted hashtags on your posts and stories is one of the best ways to get discovered by new audiences on Instagram. Numbers are allowed in hashtags. However, spaces and special characters, like \$ or %, won't work. You can use up to 30 hashtags on a post. Your hashtags should be relevant and contain keywords that your audience is actually searching for.



YouTube

YouTube is the world's largest video sharing platform, and the world's second biggest search engine, behind Google.

Getting started with YouTube...

1. Create a YouTube account

Ensure that you create a YouTube Brand Account. This will allow you to manage editing permissions and give control to other members of your team. YouTube exclusively hosts video content, so make sure that you have content to share before creating an account.

2. Customise your channel

Start by adding a channel icon and channel art (like the profile picture and cover photo on Facebook). These will be the first parts of your YouTube channel that users see when visiting, so be sure to use images that are easily recognisable.

3. Improve your SEO

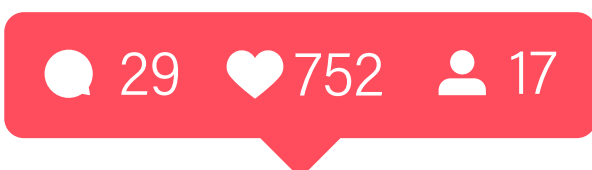
YouTube allows you to present potential customers with unique content. Make sure that you include metadata for each of your videos. Metadata gives viewers information about your video. Providing the right information ensures that your video is properly indexed by YouTube and appears when people are searching for videos like yours.

4. Use playlists

Playlists allow you to create a collection of videos from both your channel and other channels. This helps to organise your channel and encourages viewers to continue watching similar content.

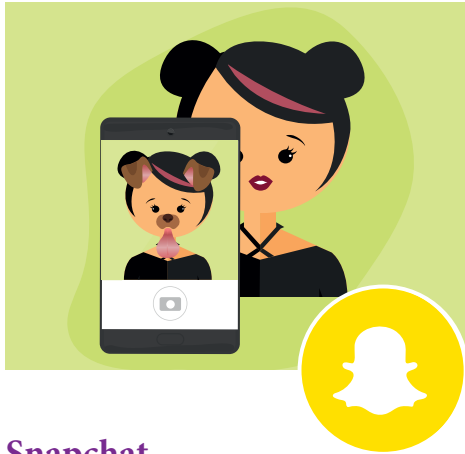
5. Consider different types of videos

Brainstorming ideas for videos from scratch can be a daunting task, here are some suggestions to get you started: customer testimonials, demonstration videos, explainer and tutorial videos, case studies and video blogs.



OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

There are of course other social media platforms out there, with new ones being developed all the time. Other popular channels include:



Snapchat

Lets users send photos or videos to friends that disappear after a short amount of time.



TikTok

Used to create short dance, lip-sync, comedy, and talent videos.



Pinterest

Enables saving and discovery of online information using images, GIFs and videos.

Ensure that you research any new social media platforms and assess if they are suitable for your business. Are you likely to find your target on there? Are you easily able to create suitable content to add value to your followers on this platform? If the answer is yes, then start planning and using the new platforms.

Five key points on social networking etiquette:

1. **Feeling unsure?**
There are lots of resources on the web about social media and how to use it, and social media courses are run all over the country.
2. **Keep it relevant**
Post interesting, relevant content and don't spam your followers.
3. **Mind your manners**
Don't post anything online that you wouldn't say or do in real life.
4. **Negative comments can and do happen**
Don't get into a comments war – respond once if necessary and then try to address the issue offline.
5. **Respect people's privacy**
Always get permission if your posts or pictures involve your customers

Google+



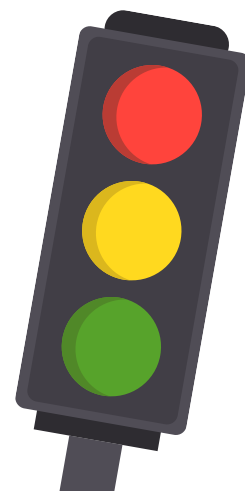
Google+ was Google's ill-fated attempt to rival to Facebook but closed down for good in April 2019 "due to low usage and challenges involved in maintaining a successful product that meets consumers' expectations" Google stated. If you had a Google+ account and are still using the Google+ logo on your website or stationery, it should be removed as soon as possible.

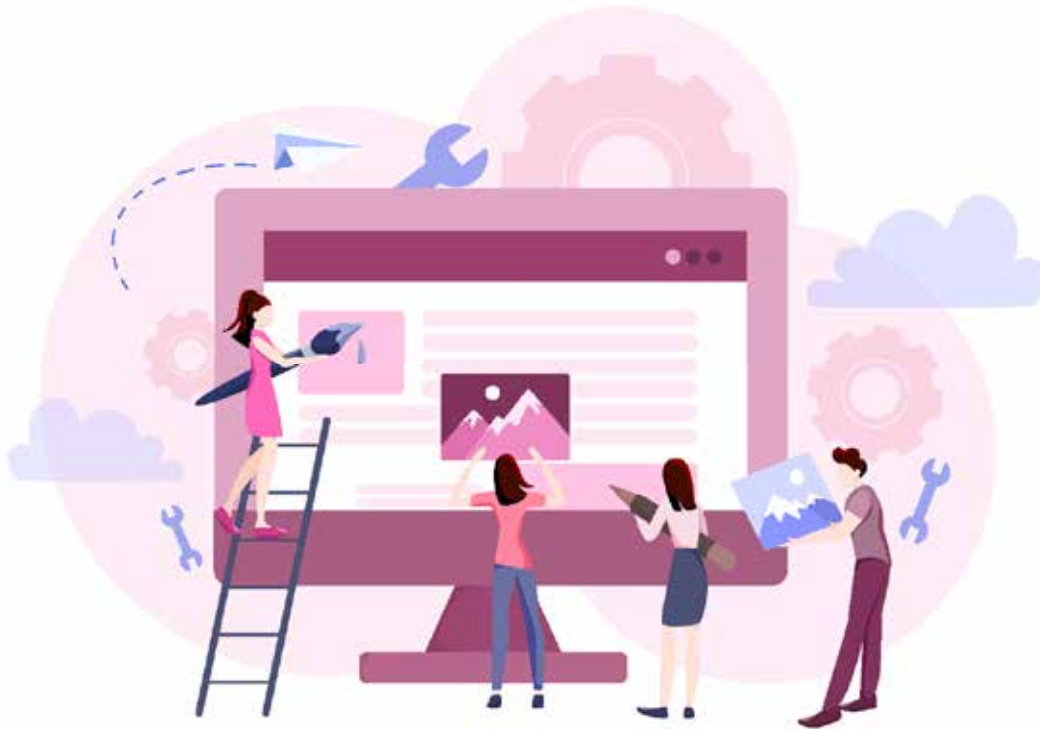
Track and measure your progress

As with any marketing campaign it is important to analyse the effectiveness of your social media efforts so that you can identify the best and worst performing content. Social media analysis will also provide insight into who you are currently reaching and where potential customers might be found.

When analysing your social media posts, use a traffic light system to plan your future content:

- **Stop:** If certain types of posts are ineffective, don't create any more of these.
- **Continue:** If some posts are doing well, continue with them.
- **Start:** If you have an idea for a post, or have seen a post on a competitors social media feed that seems promising, start posting these types of things and review at a future date.





WEBSITES

Your website should include...

Effective Headline

Your website needs to tell visitors what you have to offer. A good headline may only be a few words, but it's one of the most important pieces of text on your website and one of the first things visitors will see. Your sub-headline should offer a brief description of what you offer.

Calls-to-Action

The goal of your website is to compel visitors to move through the website and contact you. Include two to three calls-to-action that direct people to different stages of the buying cycle. Keep your text on the call-to-action buttons brief and action-oriented, so it compels visitors to click.

Images

Make sure to use images that clearly indicate what you offer. Avoid using lots of images of pests. Your audience do not want to see lots of pests, this is the reason they are contacting you. Pests are your passion, not theirs. Use images that sell the benefit of the services that you offer – a beautifully clean commercial kitchen or children playing in a safe pest-free environment for example.

Navigation

Offer your visitors a clear path into your website from the homepage. Ensure the navigation menu is visible at the top of each page.

Benefits

It's not only important to describe what you do, but also why what you do matters. Potential customers want to know about how your services will benefit them. This is where your target audience research will become useful. You may wish to have separate pages for commercial and residential customers, as the benefits to each will be different.

Customer Testimonials

Customer testimonials and reviews are a powerful indicator of trust. Include a few of your best short quotes on your homepage, and link to case studies where appropriate. If you use a 3rd party to collect reviews, ensure that you link to this from your website, or have an automatic feed embedded on your home page.

Information

Not all visitors to your website will be wanting to take up your services, yet. Sometimes people are looking for information. Offer visitors a link to pages where they can browse relevant information. Don't detail everything about every pest, pest biology is irrelevant to your customers, instead offer information or guidance on how to identify or deal with a pest problem. This keeps them on your website for longer and helps you establish your credibility in the industry.

Showcase Your Success

In addition to customer success stories, letting visitors know of your training and accomplishments can also help inspire a good first impression. Like customer testimonials, it'll give your business more credibility.

Link to Social Media

Drive traffic from your website to your social media platforms by including links to the various pages. This will encourage customers to follow you for the latest news and updates. You can also include a real-time social media feed on your website to give customers an idea of what to expect.

Contact Details

Make your contact details prominent so that people can contact you easily. Consider adding an online form to your website, rather than an email address. This will help to prevent spam to your email account and ensure that you capture all the information that is needed.

Mobile Friendly Design

An increasing number of people are using their mobile phones or tablets to browse the web. Ensure that your website is responsive and mobile-friendly to provide a much better user experience. Since Google updated their algorithm in 2015, there are also SEO benefits. You can check if your website is mobile-friendly by visiting <https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly> and entering your URL.

BLOGGING

Blogging can often be seen as being big and scary, but it doesn't have to be. Promoting your business through blogging might seem like an impossible task however, it is only another form of communicating with your audience and has great benefits.

Five ways a blog can help your business

1. Your blog should be part of your company website to help increase search engine traffic. In short, the more content/blog posts, the more web pages become indexed by search engines which improves your search visibility and thereby increases traffic to your website.
2. A blog allows you to humanise your brand more than any website content. It allows you to individually target specific concerns customers have whilst showcasing both your expertise and your personality.
3. Blogging can help your social media pages be discovered by new followers. Each time that you create a blog post you are creating content that not only you can share on social media, but so can other people, pushing your content out to a wider audience.
4. Blogs support your social media activity providing you with original, relevant content which is interesting and directs traffic to your website rather than re-sharing existing posts which will lead customers to other websites e.g. news stories.
5. It helps attract specific web searches. Whilst a search for 'company name, location' may find your website a search for 'wasps in roof space' is unlikely to find you unless your content specifically covers this query. The more interesting content/blog posts will help customers find you, improving your SEO (search engine optimisation) whilst attracting links from other sources that might share your content in their articles.

Creating the 'hook'

The hook is what makes your message interesting and gets you noticed, for example inspiring, topical or novel stories may grab your interest.

You must think of your audience and make the story interesting to them. Remember your target audience may not share your passion; it is your job to make your message interesting in order to engage them.

Before you start, think about the following...

- Who is the story about? (person/project)
- What will happen/did happen?
- Where, when, why and how will/did it happen?
- What difference will it make/has it made to the individual group, community? (i.e. added value)



- **Avoid jargon**
Use words that ordinary people will understand.
- **Make sure you don't sound like an advertisement**
It should read like a report in a newspaper.
- **Ensure you get consent**
If you are referencing people or using someone else's photographs, get consent first.
- **Use interesting quotes that sound real**
Quotes from customers or other professionals give your blog post more credibility, but make sure these are genuine and not excessive.
- **Consider the length**
Ideally your blog posts should be 300+ words to have enough content for search engines to understand what it is about, but not too long that people will lose interest.

Guest blogging

Guest blogging involves writing high quality content for third-party blogs in order to share expertise and build authority in the industry. When guest blogging, as well as finding a new audience, you will also receive backlinks to your own website which will improve your SEO.

Blogs do not fill themselves and editors do in fact welcome interesting and well written articles. The challenge is finding that elusive 'hook' that will transform your story into something that is newsworthy.

Top Tips

- **If you don't know what to write about, start with your experience.**
If you have a wealth of experience in the industry, start by writing about this. What worked for you and what didn't?
- **Send the story in the body of the email**
Make things as easy as possible for the editor. Your story is more likely to be read if the editor does not need to open an attachment.
- **Provide all the necessary contact details**
The editor may be on a tight deadline, so it is important that the named contact responds quickly to all media enquiries.



EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing is the process of targeting your audience and customers through email. You should use email marketing to build upon existing relationships with your subscribers and customers by providing relevant, valuable information that will help them.

Getting started with email marketing:

1. Create a way for people to subscribe

You will need different ways for users to sign up and give you permission to send them relevant content. People must opt-in to receive your emails. Give people the option to sign up from your social media channels and from your website.

2. Build your list

Don't be discouraged if you only have a few people on your list to start. It can take some time to build. You can create different lists for different types of customer, email marketing does not have to be a 'one size fits all' solution.

3. Choose an email type

This could be a monthly newsletter, new service announcement or sharing your blog posts. Keep your target audience at the forefront of your mind when selecting the type of email that you want to send.

4. Make a schedule

Decide how often you plan to contact your list, inform your audience upfront so they know what to expect, and stick to a consistent schedule to build trust, and so they don't forget about you.

5. Measure your results

Measuring your results will help you make small changes to your emails that will yield large results. Most email marketing software platforms will offer reports on every aspect of your email and subscriber lists.

IMPORTANT - GDPR

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is the overall name given to a series of EU laws around personal data protection. Please ensure that you are always up to date and compliant with the latest laws and regulations.



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