

Marketing Commercial HVAC System Cleaning Services

- What is Marketing?
- Benefits of offering HVAC system cleaning services.
- Who are your potential customers?
- Why are they important?
- How do you find your customers?
- How do you reach your customers?
- How do you organize and priorities your efforts?
- How do you keep your customers?
- Summary.

Blueprint for Success

Marketing Commercial HVAC System Cleaning Services

What is Marketing:

Marketing includes all functions in the process of causing goods and services to move from the supplier (you) to the customer. It touches all aspects of your business because everything you do contributes to an impression of you and your company.

Marketing can include any or all of the following:

- How you answer the phone.
- How your technicians are dressed.
- The appearance of your vehicle/truck/equipment.
- Your advertisements.
- Your web site.
- Your printed materials.
- The quality of your work.

Benefits of offering Commercial HVAC System Cleaning Services.

Offering commercial HVAC system cleaning services has benefits for both the contractor (you) and your customer.

Contractor Benefits:

- Provides an additional service to your customer base.
- Attracts new customers.
- New profit center.
- Low start-up cost.
- Rapid return on investment (good profit margins).

Client Benefits:

- Helps solve IAQ problems.
- Helps avoid costs associated with poor IAQ.
- Helps improve efficiency of HVAC system reducing energy costs.
- Improves marketability of building.

Who are your potential customers?

Anyone who has the potential to impact your business.

Potential Customers

- Mechanical Contractors
- Existing Customers
- Mechanical Engineers
- Environmental Consultants
- Fire/Water/Mold Restoration Contractors
- Asbestos Abatement Contractors
- Medical/Hospital Facilities
- Schools/Universities
- Property Management Firms
- Air Balancing Contractors
- Filtration Contractors
- Insurance Companies
- Others

Why are they important?

Existing Customers: If you have an existing business, these potential customers will be the easiest to sell to because you already have an existing business relationship. (For example if you are a commercial janitorial firm and you want to add commercial HVAC system cleaning.) You already have a roster of potential customers for your new service that know you and trust you.

Mechanical Contractors: Every part of the country has a local group of mechanical contractors that bid on and perform mechanical contracting work required in new construction and renovation projects. In many cases these projects can include HVAC system cleaning and restoration work which the mechanical contractor sub-contracts to a HVAC system cleaning contractor. If you develop a good relationship with the mechanical contractors in your area you will be asked to submit a bid/quote on the projects that have HVAC system cleaning requirements. Mechanical contractors can be the most important group of potential customer you deal with.

Mechanical Engineers: They determine specifications for the HVAC system cleaning projects and can be a good source of referrals.

Environmental Consultants: They determine specifications for the HVAC system cleaning projects. In some cases they can hire you directly and can be a good source of referrals.

Fire/Water/Mold Restoration Contractors: They can hire you as a sub contractor to provide HVAC system cleaning and restoration on fire/water/mold restoration projects. Typically these are high priority projects that must be done quickly so you have to be able to respond accordingly. Profit margins can be higher on these projects because there may not be time for competitive bidding. They hire you based on your reputation or past projects you have done for them.

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Cleaning
Services**

Asbestos Abatement

Contractors: They can hire you as a sub-contractor to provide HVAC system cleaning and restoration on asbestos abatement projects. Typically these are high priority projects that must be done quickly so you have to be able to respond accordingly. These projects can be more difficult due to containment and safety requirements. Profit margins can be higher on these projects because there may not be time for competitive bidding. They hire you base on your reputation or past projects you have done for them.

Medical/Hospital Facilities:

Can have an environmental consultant or others running the project or can hire you directly. They tend to be receptive to improving indoor air quality and lowering energy cost. If you develop a good relationship with the facility manager it can mean a long and profitable relationship.

Schools/Universities:

They can have an environmental consultant or others running the project or can hire you directly. They tend to be receptive to improving indoor air quality and lowering energy cost. If you develop a good relationship with facility manager it can mean a long and profitable relationship.

Property Management Firms:

Traditionally they are a tough sell for preventative maintenance items like HVAC system cleaning. They are more receptive if there is an IAQ problem they must deal with. The growing acceptance of “Green Buildings” and “Leeds Program” will make the property managers and facility managers more receptive to the benefits of HVA system cleaning & maintenance.

Air Balancing Contractors:

Primarily a source of referrals because they cannot balance a HVAC system that is compromised with dirt, debris and other contamination. It is good for them to know who you are.

Filtration Contractor:

Primarily a source of referrals because when they change out filters in an HVAC system they can see if it is dirty. It is good for them to know who you are.

Insurance companies:

Typically don't hire you directly but they can block you from getting fire/water/mold restoration projects. It is good for them to know who you are

As you identify all your potential clients it's a good idea to enter the information into a data base. You can organize your data base by type of prospect or customer and keep track of your activity with each prospect/customer. For example: the data base will let you pull out a specific type of prospect (i.e. mechanical contractor) so you can send them a newsletter that is designed around their needs and expectations.



How do you find your customers?

- Local Yellow Pages or internet Yellow pages. You can find basic company information and then call to find out best contact person.
- Association membership

lists. ASHRAE, ACCA, Facility Managers, Hospital Engineers, Property Managers, Environmental Consultants, School Facility Managers and others have associations.

- Local business publications may periodically publish lists like top 25 Property Management firms or Hospitals, etc.
- Construction bid publications like Dodge Construction Reports and others tell you about upcoming renovation and building projects that can include HVAC system cleaning. If you subscribe to their service you can get mechanical plans of the projects you want to bid/quote on.
- Referrals from past satisfied customers.

Now that you have found them—How do you reach your customers?

Initial contact:

- Introductory letter with statement of qualification or company capabilities.
- Phone follow-up to set up an appointment.
- Face to face meeting where you present your companies capabilities and experience. If you have a website you could use that to present your company capabilities. Your goal is to present yourself as the expert so they will want to work with you in the future.

Ongoing contact:

To maintain awareness your customers and potential customers be reminded of your capabilities periodically. There are several way to do this including:

- Newsletter: A monthly or quarterly newsletter is an easy way to maintain awareness. You can create this on your computer and e-mail or fax them to your database. Plus you can post it on your website if you have one. Make sure the content of your news letter offers something of value to your customers like a "job story," "how to" section, etc. good
- Periodic phone follow-up and face to face meetings can really reinforce the awareness of your companies capabilities in your customers eyes.
- Local Association meetings like ASHRAE on others are great venues to network.
- Educational seminars are a good way to establish and maintain your company as the "expert." You can give these seminars as part of an association meeting, or maybe a small group of companies get together and sponsor an IAQ seminar in which you participate.

Advertising:

There are many advertising options in today's marketplace for you to choose from including:

- Yellow pages.
- Direct mail.
- Local trade associations.
- Local trade shows.
- News releases, job stories, articles.
- Space advertising in local media.
- Web-site
- Others

Whatever advertising methods you choose to use try to find a way to measure the effectiveness of the ads. This will allow you to determine the most effective advertising method.

Post Project Follow-up:

Once you have completed a project (and did a great job) it's the perfect time to follow up with your customer with a Customer Satisfaction Survey.

You should develop a short one page questionnaire to thank your customer for their business and then ask them for feedback on your services. You can mail the post project Customer Satisfaction Survey or do it over the phone.

If you do this consistently over time you'll get valuable information and you should be able to see trends (both good and not so good). The survey completes the sales cycle and is another part of good customer service.

Marketing Materials:

You will need some basic marketing tools/materials to use when you meet with your potential and existing customers. These include:

- Business card.
- Company capabilities piece. This can be a printed piece or it can be your web site. The idea is to present yourself as a professional. You will want to list any certifications you have, list past projects and customers (with their permission of course), list the services you offer, before and after photos, testimonials and anything else you think will help set you apart from your competition.

How do you organize and prioritize your efforts?

Since you can't contact and follow up with everyone of your potential customers at once you will have to prioritize your marketing efforts. A good way to do this is to create a marketing plan.

A simple marketing plan should be short and include the following items:

- Purpose/mission statement.
- Current situation.
- Problems and opportunities.
- Competition
- Define goals.
- Strategies (how to get there)

Going through this exercise makes you step back and think about your business in a different way than you do during your day to day activities. It should also help you determine the potential rewards of each customer segment which will help you determine the priority of your marketing activities.

How do you keep your existing customers?

The best way to keep a current customer is to make sure they are happy with the quality and price of your work.

The best marketing in the world cannot overcome poor service.

Keeping customers happy is a great investment because:

- Satisfied customers give free referrals. You can't get any better advertising than that!
- It cost 6 - 10 times more to get a new customer than to keep an existing one.

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Basically treat your customer like you like to be treated:

- Do a good job the first time.
- Stand behind your work and be attentive to any problems.
- Thank them for their business.
- Do a post project Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- Maintain periodic contact.
- Reward them with some sort of a customer loyalty program.

Summary:

Hopefully this document has helped you understand the basics of Marketing Commercial HVAC System Cleaning Services. If you have any questions or want to discuss anything in this “Blueprint for Success - Marketing HVAC System Cleaning Services” document please contact:

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“Our sole purpose is to help you succeed and we hope this document is helpful in reaching that goal!”

“Blueprint for Success” is a series of articles and publications developed by Vac Systems International to help you succeed as an air duct cleaning contractor. In addition to this publication they include:

- Residential Planning Guide.
- Commercial Planning Guide.
- Introduction to Coating HVAC Systems Guide
- “Selecting the right tool for the job” article.
- “Profit follows productivity” article.
- “The air duct cleaning opportunity for HVAC Contractors” article.