

5 CRITICAL
MARKETING
STRATEGIES
FOR SUCCESSFUL HOME INSPECTORS

**FIND OUT WHAT OTHER SUCCESSFUL
HOME INSPECTORS ARE DOING**



Full View Home
Inspector Marketing

Where to Start

If you are reading this, then you are obviously interested in either starting a home inspection company, or already own one and want to kick it into high gear. But where do you start?

I have started and still run three successful inspection companies that are still thriving. One of the keys to all of those home inspection companies was marketing.

I remember starting a second home inspection company, which was very exciting. But the main inspector I had on staff was worried. He had never taken on a venture like this. But I wasn't worried at all. Because if you have a good product (i.e. you and your home inspections) and a good marketing strategy – the work will come.

But we hear the terms "online marketing", "SEO", and "networking", and many other terms – but what do they all really mean in real-life terms? It is an interesting position to be in, because who do you really ask? Most successful home inspectors keep their work sources well guarded. Whereas other successful home inspectors are happy to "sell you" their secrets.

In reality, though, the marketing end of things is relatively simple. And it really means trudging in the trenches, and most importantly – not giving up!

Another important aspect is to diversify your marketing. If you get all your work from agents, then what happens when a whole office black-lists you for calling out a defect? Or if you get all your work from the internet, what happens when a new guy shows up with a great site that pushes yours down the list?

It's all about diversifying. That is why we will outline 5 areas of marketing and how to work them. That way, your eggs are not all in one basket.

So let's discuss 5 areas of marketing that you can take advantage of, how you can work each angle, and make sure not too much of your work is made up of one source. Those areas are:

1. Online
2. Agents
3. Networking
4. Previous Clients
5. The Home Inspection Itself

Each one of those seems simple at first – and they are to an extent. But if it was simple, we would all do those five things and just be super rich... but it doesn't work that way.

So let's go through this step by step. Starting with (of course) online marketing.

Step 1: Online Marketing

So this is an easy one – online marketing. I think it is every home inspector's dream to have their online marketing so good, and so tight, that they don't have to rely on real estate agent referrals. But that leaves us with a question – is that possible?

You might be surprised by the answer that I will give in a moment. But I wanted to start by telling you a story of one of my home inspector marketing clients. A marketing client called me one day who was upset because one of his competitors had been “beating” him online and that this competitor was getting 50% of their work from their website. We had been doing some SEO for this client for about 6-8 months – so still a new client. So we delved into it a bit for him, and here is what we found out.

I first asked where he heard this from. Apparently, the competitor in question was telling this to agents. So I asked, "do any of those agents refer them?" - "No!" he said, "they are terrible inspectors and all the agents hate him". So I looked him up online, and for the life of me, I couldn't find their website in searches. In fact, my client's website was well above them at the top of page one. Finally, we typed in their URL and their website came up – straight out of the 90's.... it was terrible. Who would ever hire this guy with a website like this? And it couldn't be found in searches! I then looked up their reviews online – and they were bad too.... like, 1-star reviews all over...

So after all of this, I asked a simple question: "how many inspections do they do each year?". He didn't know exactly, but he knew that they didn't do more than 10 or so at most each year (which is obviously not many at all). So let's review: they have a terrible website, agents hate them, their clients hate them, and they have bad reviews.... So how were they "beating him" online? They weren't.

The point of the story is that anyone can say whatever they want – and even believe it – but it doesn't make it true. It's easy to say you get 50% of your inspections from the internet if you are only doing 2 inspections a month.

So that was a long way to say that no matter what other inspectors tell you, that no matter what the telemarketer says when he calls you, or whatever a marketing firm says – home inspection companies are NOT built on the internet alone. If it did build an inspection business for someone, then they are the exception and not the rule.

But this does not make your internet presence any less important. But we need to know the difference between 1) lead generation, and 2) lead conversion. So what is the difference?

Lead generation is what companies like Home Advisor, Angie's List, and others do. You pay money, they send you leads. But your website and other marketing are not primarily built that way. Now don't get me wrong, your online presence can generate leads. One of my own home inspection companies that I own gets as many as 10-20 leads a month (sometimes) from the

website. But even if it didn't, it would still be doing its job – CONVERTING LEADS.

So let's talk about lead conversion. So when someone gets handed three business cards, gets referred to three different home inspectors, or even does a search online and finds three inspectors, which one do they choose? Here is where lead conversion comes in. Your online presence either turns the person to the other inspector or makes them call and hire only you.

The interesting thing is that a lot of inspectors say “My site has been there for years and I don't notice a difference”. That is because with bad lead conversion you are losing clients without even knowing it – and they are going to your competitor.

So now that we have that out of the way, let's talk about three main parts of online marketing that you want to tackle as your primary media:

1. Your website,
2. social media,
3. and review sites

Your Website – Your website should be all about you and why hire you – not “why you should get a home inspection” like a lot of home inspector websites. They already know they want a home inspection – that is why they are on your site. So sell yourself – not the industry.

Never make anything up, but you can make things sound better – especially if you're a newbie. For instance, you could say "I worked with my dad growing up and I have a lot of construction experience", but that is like trying to sell a doughnut and saying "it tastes like cake and has a hole in it".... not very exciting. Instead, you could say "I have years of construction experience that are invaluable to me as a home inspector. While other home inspectors are only able to see an issue, I understand them – because I have likely fixed that very issue with my own two hands. We know the homes in the area, what they go through, and what you can expect from them. This comes from being in the trades and taught from a young age by my father. I gained not only work experience that is hard to match but a knowledge and work ethic for my clients that can't be mimicked". See the difference? We said the same thing, but it is more attractive to clients.

Your website should also not be an encyclopedia. It buries the information that you want people to really find. In that regard, make your contact information prominent, as well as your service areas. Make it easy for people to find you. Always have a contact form and link it to buttons at key areas that say “Book Now!” or “Contact Us” or “Learn More”. They are called “call-to-actions”, or CTA's.

Be sure to make those CTA's actually work though. Make it easy for people to schedule an inspection with online scheduling. There are plenty of online scheduling services out there. Inspector Toolbelt even has a free online scheduling service – so there really is not reason to not have that available for your clients.

As for pages, it is best to work with convention – have a home page, an about me page, a page

describing the home inspection, a contact page, and a blog page at the very least. Now for SEO, that is a different story. And we will save that for our SEO guide which you can get from us. For now, let's talk about social media.

Social Media – Facebook and Instagram are not just for your teenage daughter anymore. People use social media – agents, brokers, your clients, your clients' friends... almost everyone. There are some very good reasons to be involved with social media. Networking is more complex than it used to be – but much easier.

We will just use Facebook here for an example – but the basic rules apply to a lot of social sites. Years ago I started using Facebook to gain new agents. So I would “like” the posts of agents, leave tasteful comments like “wow, nice floors” or “I grew up down the street from there” and whatever else applied. If they had an interesting post – I would share it. If they had a question, I would answer it.

It seems like a lot of work, but it wasn't. I have it on my phone and every couple of hours I would check and do what I mentioned above. After a while the agents started reacting back, leaving comments, and sharing my posts too. Then their clients saw them, checked my site, saw that the agents knew me and that I knew my trade, and then they would hire me. The agents especially liked it. In fact, one of my favorite offices to work with openly tell everyone that they refer me to all their clients because I was persistent (but respectful) on Facebook.

You can interact and join in on many social sites like that. Want to get on Instagram? That is very popular with agents and clients. Want to use LinkedIn? That is great for networking with professionals. And the list goes on and on. Remember that it is a cumulative effect, so give it time.

A word of warning – never advertise yourself on other peoples' posts or pages, never use foul language, never post inappropriate material (no matter how funny you think it is). Keep it professional – otherwise, you alienate people who have a different view on life than you. This also means keeping politics out of your posts.

Review Sites – This is a very important part. People rely on reviews from sites to make almost every decision in life. Google, Facebook, Yelp, Home Advisor, Angie's List, and more. The problem is that you can't control the reviews – just do the best you can with what people give you. Be persistent when trying to get reviews. Find your happiest clients and email them, a dozen times if you have to, asking for a review.

The more reviews you have the better – so go out there and get them. But what happens when you get a bad review? First, calm down. It can be infuriating – but how you respond is more important than the review. Be polite, professional, and never accuse or attack the reviewer.

Doing this helps people see that the reviewer may be in the wrong. A home inspector in my area one time got more work from his response to a bad review than he did from his good reviews.

Either way, your online presence is important, but let's tackle the subject of agents now.

Step 2: Agents

By far, marketing to agents is the bread and butter of most inspection companies – whether we like to admit it or not. Direct to consumer marketing is great – but each consumer represents one inspection, but each agent represents multiple inspections for many years. If an agent sells 10 houses a year, over the course of 10 years that is 100 houses. So you need to put in much less effort to get multiple inspections when you market to agents.

So many inspectors may get upset at the fact that home inspectors market to agents. Many feel that agents are dishonest and that the way to market to agents is to write a "soft" report. While there is the potential for that, it is not the only side of it.

I have hundreds of agents that refer me and my other inspectors – and we write some of the hardest inspection reports out there. In fact, we are “blacklisted” by some agencies because they feel we are too hard on a house. So why do we have more work than we can handle from agent referrals? Because we don't go after EVERY agent – just the honest ones.

There are dishonest people in every trade, and as an old friend once said "scum floats at the same level". So dishonest home inspectors tend to end up with dishonest agents. So if you are honest, professional, hard-working, and state things as they are, you will attract the agents that are like that too. Market honestly, be honest and do a good job.

So now that we are over the ethics of marketing to agents, let's talk about how to do it.

Four Times – Many years ago I heard a home inspector say that you need to “touch” an agent four times before you have a relationship with them and they start referring you – and there is a lot of truth to that. It doesn't mean it's an exact rule, but it helps us to understand relationship building. So how do you “touch” an agent four times?

There is always the tried and (somewhat) true method that everyone falls back on of bringing donuts and business cards to real estate offices. You end up spending a lot of time on this, and while results can happen, the return on interest is not always that great.

While doughnut money and gas money can add up, there are some better ways to market to agents if you are on a budget. First of all, emails. Do NOT spam email everyone in your market, but follow up on EVERY interaction.

Did you leave doughnuts in an office? Then grab some of the business cards of the manager and some of the agents (or look them up online). Since you obviously put a sticker with your logo on the box of doughnuts, they know who left them. Afterward, send an email and say "We

hope you enjoyed the treats we left in your office today...." and "touch" them again. Do that at every office, every time you meet an agent, every time you are on an inspection.

We talked about online marketing previously, so use that. Now go to their Facebook Business Page, Instagram, etc, and just casually "like" their listings. Every once in a while, leave a tasteful comment like "Great location!". A word of caution though: Don't get overeager and barrage them. Step back and just ease into each agent. Remember, agents get marketed to by lenders, attorneys, inspectors, movers, and just about everyone under the sun – so they get sick of it pretty quick. Be present, but not aggressive.

Coupons - So this is simple and effective. After you have been building up your email list of agents, start sending coupons. But again, caution is needed. Too many coupons or too big of a coupon and you seem desperate. Too small of a coupon or a coupon that is confusing and you seem all over the place. Here is the formula that I always used: Once every three months I would do a \$50 coupon and limit it to the next 30 days. \$50 was enough to make it worth it, but not so much to seem desperate. I ALWAYS got new agents that way.

So those agents that you had been building that relationship with who have never used you have a client who is tight on cash and needs an inspection and all of a sudden has a coupon from an inspector that he/she recognizes from all the stuff you did from the subheading above – who do you think they will call?

Awesome! You have your first inspection for a new agent. Now what? Now keep emailing them and marketing to them like before. Casually ask for them the next time you visit their office with the doughnuts (can you tell I don't like the whole doughnut thing?), and then use them to eventually work your way into meeting the office manager – and that is key.

The Office Meeting - After you meet the manager, Casually ask about doing a 5 min presentation at their next office meeting. Most offices have a weekly meeting which usually happens on a Monday or Tuesday. Once you are in though, what do you do?

Remember to see things from their angle. All agents dread having a home inspector in. It's the same speech every time "Hi, I'm Joe Home Inspector and I am thorough, professional, etc.". So don't be that guy. Here is how I always started out every meeting " Hi, I am obviously a home inspector, and I know how much everyone loves to hear a home inspector talk about how awesome he is for 5 minutes" - said sarcastically. After the slight chuckle, I would say "So I am going to spare you all of that. I am thorough and qualified, but I want to talk about something that may help you and what you do".

After that, I would build a presentation around something for THEM, but was secretly about me. For instance, we used Home Binder for a while. We would set it up for each client for that office and insert the agent's info so it looked like the reminders were coming from the agent. In reality, we were marketing ourselves – because the agent got email reminders from us from Home Binder.

Another thing we did were the InterNACHI coloring books. Every agent ends up with the clients who have crazy kids inside of other people's houses. So I would print the InterNACHI coloring book at Office Max in a nice cheap binder, buy a \$1 box of crayons, slap my logo on both of them, and give them to the agents to keep the kids occupied. By far, that was my most popular office presentation material to date. They loved them. And when the parents finally bought their house, who do you think they ended up calling? Because our logo and contact info were already in their view during the whole house finding process.

So the point to take home with office meetings is that instead of marketing yourself, bring something useful to the agents, and then they will like you for that.

Trade Shows - These are another way to meet and get to know agents, but something that many home inspectors do not like. The reason they don't like them is "I get no work out of them". But that is a very short-sighted view. Most things that build a business do not give you immediate results.

Trade shows make you known. They get you to "touch" that agent at least once. More importantly, you get to "touch" a lot at once.

When it comes to trade shows, doing the ones that count are important. Contact your local board(s) of realtors and try to sponsor a table with your cards and things like that on it. Always be sure to have something to draw the agents in – something simple like candy. As they approach, talk to every one of them. Do not spend too much time with any one agent though – there is always that one agent who doesn't sell any houses that will talk your ear off for an hour.

Always have a giveaway. Nothing big, but nothing too small either. I always found that a wine gift set (bottle of wine with a fancy opener and glasses) was always effective. For \$30 I would have a giveaway that attracted agents to leave their business cards in the giveaway entry box. So for that \$30, I would sometimes have 200-300 business cards. I would take those cards and enter them into my email system. I would email all of them a thank you note for visiting our table. Then say "while you didn't win our wine, we wanted to give you a \$25 off coupon for your client's next home inspection with us".

Then I would go and "friend" all of them on Facebook. Then I would tag as many as possible/reasonable in different pictures from the event. I would also be sure to "like" all of their pages and connect with them on LinkedIn and endorse them for some skills. Again, caution is needed. Allow enough time in between all of this so that you do not look like a creepy stalker.

So in short, marketing to agents is all about just being there, having professional and polite interactions with them, and building a relationship.

And again, if you are an honest, hardworking, and professional person, those are the types of agents you will attract. They are the ones who care about people, and who recommend you because you care about people too.

Now let's talk about a subject that is closely related to this one – Networking.

Step 3: Networking

If there is any aspect of the home inspection industry that I think I hear the most complaints about – it's this one. Most home inspectors don't like networking. We are home inspectors – not politicians.

But there is a sad truth that I learned many years ago. I watched a home inspector that had a terrible reputation. In fact, I don't know if I knew of anyone that had been sued more than this particular inspector. His reports were terrible (in my opinion) and he had a reputation for being one of the worst home inspectors out there – but he was ridiculously busy. In fact, he was one of the busiest home inspectors I have ever met.

In that same room was a home inspector who was one of the best home inspectors I know. He was awesome, professional, polite, and knew more about a building than most people could dream of – and he was struggling. He couldn't get work. But he refused to network – but the terrible inspector, that's all he did was network.

That just shows the unfortunate truth of our industry though: If you are good but don't network, you will not do nearly as well as a terrible inspector who does network. Networking is extremely important.

It all comes down to relationship building and being known. Keep in mind, we are not talking about advertising to agents like we did before. Networking takes in a wider net and is not necessarily direct marketing. It is not always about the real estate agent either.

So how does networking happen and with whom does it happen? The answer is: all the time and with everyone.

One of the best ways to network is to think about everyone else in a transaction. The mortgage broker, the insurance salesman, the appraiser, the attorneys, the contractors who come in to do work, etc. Knowing those people and having them as a network is key to success.

I will give you an example. One of the big brokerages had these mix-and-mingle events every year. Most inspectors I know stopped going to it because they said "I don't get any work out of it" - which is very short sighted in my opinion. I kept going, year after year and stuck with it. Eventually, the woman who ran the program and I got to trust each other and built a great relationship. Eventually, I became the company's "premier inspection vendor" as she put it. When they came out with their own real estate TV show, I was the one who was asked to be on it.

What did that do for me? It gave me “street cred” so-to-speak. Now all 400 of their agents know my face and my company. The moral of the story is that networking does not usually yield immediate results. In fact, it may be a long time before you see results – but they do eventually come.

An important part of that story was the woman with whom I built a professional relationship with was not an agent. In fact, I would spend almost as much time networking with the vendors at those mixers as I would with the agents.

I built a relationship with a respected mold remediation company and with a water treatment company many years ago. They did great work and were used a lot. So when someone even mentioned a home inspector, guess who they recommended. If an agent never used me before and asked anyone about me, everyone knew me and had a good opinion of me – so it helped with my relationships with agents.

On top of that though, it made transactions easier. If I found a major problem in a home and the sellers tried to contest it, many times the contractors and attorneys would back me up because they knew I was a good inspector – which added to my company's reputation and credibility.

We have also mentioned the fact that you don't want to put all your eggs in one basket, and networking helps you to do that. Some weeks I will look at the calendars for any one of my inspection companies and I will get almost as many inspections from other referral sources as I did from agents and the internet. There are attorneys I will go and have coffee with. Mortgage brokers that I call and chat with, and contractors that I make sure I talk with whenever possible.

Every person you network with will eventually know someone who is buying a home and then will refer you. Every person you meet in life is a potential referral source – or even a client.

Here is a couple of pointers about networking properly though. First, keep it light and brief. Relationships happen over time, so don't rush it.

Second, keep it professional but friendly. Getting too personal about yourself or about them too early in the game is just going to feel uncomfortable for everyone.

Third, remember names and conversations. Keep notes on everyone as much as possible. Did Greg the attorney mention that he was going to Florida for a month? Ask him if he had a good time. Did Barbara the loan officer at the bank mention her nephew was in high school football? Mention the game that was shown on the local news.

But here is a word of warning: Networking done wrong looks like stalking. Be careful not to invade personal space, get too chummy, or know too many facts about their life. It will just weird people out.

If you are a good home inspector, let people know about it. A home inspector I was training one time told me that if he was a good inspector that he shouldn't need to advertise it. But that couldn't be farther from the truth. But if you are good, and you network properly, then you will

do your clients a great service by putting yourself out there where you can be found.

So let's talk about another way to market your home inspection company and gain more work: previous clients.

Step 4: Previous Clients

When we talk about using previous clients as a source of business for your home inspection company, we are not talking about the old-school sending of postcards once a year. Instead, we are talking about a strategic (and ultimately automated) marketing campaign.

To start though, just a word of warning. Marketing to, and through, previous clients can be a two-edged sword. Obviously, if you do a great job it isn't an issue for the most part. But if you remind a client that didn't like you in the first place that you are still out there, then that can mean trouble. Also, that grumpy client that you inspected for five years ago gets an email from you in the same day their heating unit fails they may wonder "why didn't he magically predict this thing would break five years later?" and either leave you a bad review somewhere... or worse. So be judicious how you use previous clients as a marketing source.

Now that we have that out of the way, let's talk about two ways to market with previous clients: 1 – marketing TO previous clients, and 2 - marketing THROUGH previous clients.

Marketing TO previous clients. This is pretty straightforward, but it comes down to a matter of keeping good records. The whole thing starts with keeping the name, and contact info from every client you have ever worked with. In this regard, ISN is a great resource. If you don't use ISN, you can always just keep a word document or excel file (but ISN is way better).

The average person who buys a home nowadays does not stay there as long as people did in the past. In fact, in some areas of the country, people who buy a home are likely to “upgrade” or downsize in the next 5-10 years. So that means a whole new set of inspections for clients that you already know.

A great way to market to previous clients is obviously an email newsletter with maintenance reminders. InterNACHI has a free newsletter that you can enter your client's info into.

Another resource is a program like Home Binder. If a client uses Home Binder, it brands your company with email reminders for many years to come – and they always remember that you were the one who set it up for them.

A third avenue is through social media. I try to connect with most of my clients on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, or whatever they happen to use. I usually do it right after a home inspection so I am fresh in their minds. To this day, I still have clients ask me home related questions through social media, and then I usually end up inspecting their next home.

Either way, having regular contact with your clients is an important way to market to them. But now let's talk about the next aspect – Marketing THROUGH your clients.

Marketing THROUGH your clients. Your previous clients can become your personal army of advertisers. Use your connections with them to make connections with others – either directly or indirectly.

We had mentioned in a previous paragraph about social media, but we are going to talk about it again. Remember that if you inspect for a 35-year-old professional who is buying their first home, that likely he has a circle of friends in the same/similar position in life. So if you take a picture of the outside of the home you inspected for that person, put it on Facebook, tag your client and their agent in it, then all of their friends will see their new home and YOUR company name.

In addition to that, if you choose to run paid ads on forums like Instagram and Facebook, you can now target those ads to appear in front of your client's friends and family – and that is a powerful tool.

In that same vein, the more you genuinely interact with your clients online, the more they interact with you, and the more others see that online. For instance, someone found an old phone box on the outside of their house. He and all their friends were trying to figure it out. Then one of my clients (who was in the discussion) tagged me in the discussion and asked if I could chime in – which I did. All of their friends (who were all buying houses or looking) all saw my company name and asked me questions after I answered what the box was.

That is just one example of taking a few moments to connect with previous clients over social media. When you do, the benefits are not immediate, but instead are long term.

Another way to market through your previous clients is to make sure they leave you reviews. Statistics show time and again that when people choose a professional, they rely heavily on reviews.

They want to see that you have been around, do good work, and that people like you. The major ones to be concerned with (as of the writing of this) are Google Business Reviews, Facebook Reviews, Yelp Reviews, Angie's List, Zillow, and Home Advisor (if you choose to use them – there are mixed feelings out there on Home Adviser and the others).

When you have an arsenal of good reviews, it is hard to lose a client to another home inspector. After every home inspection send an email with an easy link for the client to click on and review you.

Make sure it is easy for them to leave a review, or they won't. Ask a couple of times. Most won't leave a review, but being persistent is important. Also, right after the home inspection is the best time, because that is when they are the happiest with you.

Whatever way you choose to connect with previous clients, remember that previous clients are an important marketing point. And best of all, it is mostly done free – just with a little effort. Now let's talk about our last marketing point – The Home Inspection Itself.

Step 5 – How To Market Using Your Home Inspection

When it comes to marketing, your home inspection is by far one of the most useful tools. Your home inspection can market harder than your business cards, email campaigns, and networking efforts combined.

But keep in mind, when we say “use your home inspection to market”, we don’t mean to say “Wait until they see how much I know about the house” or “wait until they see how thorough and professional I am”. People expect those things of you already. When they hire you, they expect you to know a lot about a house, to be thorough, and to be professional. So that is not going to set you apart.

So what WILL set you apart? How can you effectively use your home inspection as a marketing tool?

Branding - Not enough could be said about branding. And branding is not just about having a logo and a catchy name. Branding is about having a brand and then making it recognized.

First of all, be sure that your logo, website, vehicle, shirts, hats, everything, all match. Color schemes, logos, and more. Don’t hide your logo in a lot of words either. Everyone recognizes NACHI in our industry. No one wonders where you work if you live in Orlando FL and where black mouse ears on your polo. Most people grab their soda of choice without ever reading the words, but they recognize the logo.

You may never be as recognized as those brands mentioned above, but you can do it to a certain degree. For instance, when I started my first home inspection company, I branded right away. So good or bad, when the agents saw my vehicle pull up, they knew who I was. When the listing agent came into the basement to see who I was, they saw my logo on my hat and shirt and knew right away. All of my guys wore those logos.

I once hired a home inspector who did not like to wear the polo and hat with the logo on it, but he did anyway. He stopped complaining once when he ended up doing a septic inspection, and another inspector from another company did the home inspection. When the home inspector pulled up, he wondered who this guy was and thought it may be his client. He was dressed like a construction worker. Even our client didn't know he was the home inspector. Even though one of the agents knew him, it took her a minute to figure out who he was and that he was the home inspector. After he saw that, he called me and asked for more polo shirts and hats and said: "branding is everything – I get it now".

Business Cards and Contacts - Every home inspection is an opportunity. If you are an experienced inspector, you may know every agent on site. But as a new inspector, every home inspection is an opportunity.

We all like to carry business cards with us. But do you utilize them? Do you leave one with each agent? Each client and everyone that came with them? Do you leave one on the kitchen counter with a note for the seller thanking them for allowing you to inspect their home?

In addition to that, take the business card of every agent you meet. When I first started, I took the business card of every agent I met and put it right in my email system. Even the cards of agents who showed the house earlier who left the cards on the counter. Every email and contact was a piece of gold.

Remember in an earlier part of this book that we mentioned that you need four points of contact before someone remembers you? Well, use the home inspection to do that. If you use a service like Inspector Toolbelt, be sure to get the contact information for each agent before the inspection (easy to get off of multiple different websites). Program Inspector Toolbelt to send reminder emails before the inspection. Then you meet and greet on site, take their card, and send them a thank you email afterward. Then 30 days later, send them another thank-you email – something like "it has been 30 days since the inspection at 123 Main St and I just wanted to say thank you again for allowing us to work with your client".

So when you count them up, it is four points of contact. If you don't use Inspector Toolbelt, you can always do that manually – it is just more work.

Be Clean and Respectful - I wish I didn't have to say this, but it is important. Too many home inspectors get complained about by agents for not taking their shoes off, tracking mud in the home, getting insulation everywhere, or otherwise just not being respectful of other people's homes.

I have won over more agents and clients by just changing my shoes when entering the home. You can also wear shoe covers. When coming out of the attic, did you vacuum up your mess? Did you protect their clothes and personal items when entering the attic? Bring a small 1 gal shop vac with you so that you can clean up small messes. If someone says "don't worry about it", insist on it politely and clean your mess. Most people won't say anything, but you just won someone's respect there very likely.

Then there is personal cleanliness. Everyone expects you to get a little dirty during a home inspection, but they don't expect you to show up for a home inspection already dirty. Have two or three inspections on the same day? Bring extra clothes with you to change into. Also, bring face masks and coveralls for dirty areas – everyone will appreciate that.

Then there is the matter of “respect”. I have seen a lot of my competition use foul language on site, make inappropriate jokes, or otherwise not present themselves as a professional. Even if your client and the agents seem like they appreciate it or that is how they are talking, take the higher road and stay professional.

The Home Inspection Report - The home inspection report is a critical marketing tool. It is what gets left for everyone. It is how attorneys and others who have never met you get to see how awesome you are. But can they tell who you are?

I teach home inspection courses in the State that I live in. For one of those courses, I had to rummage through hundreds of home inspection reports (in full or in part). One thing I noticed was that I couldn't tell who wrote the report most of the time....

Almost every report had a huge picture of the house on the front, the client name, and then somewhere inconspicuous I would find a logo and a name, but I had to search for it. So if you have someone who thinks you are just the best inspector in the world just by reading your report – they would have no idea who you are.

I had an attorney call me one time because he thought my reports were awesome and he started to refer me. I met an agent who referred me because of my reports too. I had an entire real estate attorney office get to know my company because half their transactions had our reports that month.

But why did they so readily recognize me? On the cover page of my report, I put our company logo and all our contact information. We had the inspection address as well, but we made our contact information and logo the highlight. That way, even if you glanced at the report on someone's desk as they walked by, our logo would jump out at you.

We also put all our information at the top of each page of the report. Think of your home inspection report as a large marketing brochure. If you write an awesome report, let everyone know about it.

And that brings me to the content of the report itself. Your report will likely pass many hands, so make sure it is good. If you don't include pictures, start today. Grammar errors? Never, ever, have grammar errors. Proper punctuation, a nice layout, and photos are extremely important.

Then there is the matter of turnaround time. Not too much, and not too little. Everyone has their opinion on this, but here is just mine: I hate on-site reports. It makes it look like you didn't put any effort into it. Even if you can do it, maybe wait until the end of the day to send it out. It makes the client feel better – like you worked harder to do it for them.

Then too, waiting too long is not great either. People want their information, and they don't want to wait a week for it. I have always found that the sweet spot was same-day reports, or at least within 24 hours. Keeps the client and agents happy, keeps the transaction moving, and gives you time to write your report properly.

So those are some ways to use your home inspection and report as marketing material.

Conclusion

So those are just a few ways to help start or boost your home inspection business. I have started and run three successful inspection companies, and these are all suggestions that I have personally used. There is obviously much more to being a successful home inspector, but we will cover that in future books and blogs :). Happy inspecting!

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