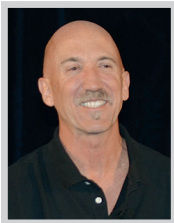




How **marketing** can boost your home inspection business

Q&A with Kevin O'Malley,
home inspection guru and author



Kevin O'Malley

Marketing is one of the most significant factors in starting a home inspection business. Successful home inspectors use proven marketing tools such as understanding the competition and identifying a niche to promote their services. Though it can be costly up front, complicated and sometimes frustrating, marketing will ensure a home inspection business will grow and prosper, according to Kevin O'Malley, author of "[Marketing & Operating a Profitable Home Inspection Business](#)." The book was recently published by OnCourse Learning's home inspection training school, [American Home Inspectors Training](#). In the following Q&A, O'Malley shares some tips to help market a home inspection business.

Why is a comprehensive home inspection marketing plan important?

O'Malley: A good marketing plan enhances your business plan and brings together all your marketing research so you can work out exactly where your business is going and how it is going to get there. A good marketing plan will save you money in the long run by cutting out unnecessary expenses while at the same time presenting you with new opportunities. Without a good home inspection marketing plan, it is possible that you are not taking full advantage of all the ways to reach your target audience.

What should a home inspection marketing plan include?

O'Malley: Your written document should include:

- Objectives
- Details of the current market
- Analysis of your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Plans for achieving your objectives

It is important for the plan to be flexible to adapt to changing conditions in the market.

What's the best, low-cost way to implement a marketing plan?

O'Malley: Research shows that face-to-face marketing is one of the most inexpensive and efficient ways to get your name out there. Face-to-face marketing is cost-effective for reaching large numbers of people in a short time frame. Whatever you do, first grab people's attention and then maintain it long enough for them to engage in the message you are conveying. Keep getting out in front of people when money gets tight — it's a low-cost and effective way to market yourself. Opportunities are out there. You just need to find them. Marketing is a lot like farming; you need to plant the seeds before you can harvest the crops.

How much time should be spent on marketing? How should that time be spent?

O'Malley: Aggressive marketing should take 20 to 30 hours out of your week if you are a full-time inspector, or five to seven hours if you are part-time. Meet with as many real estate agents as possible. Give out five to 10 business cards per day. Join state or other local real estate associations or boards. Go to business luncheons

and provide breakfast or lunch to targeted real estate offices. Attend two to three open houses per week.

How should marketing efforts be tracked?

O'Malley: The most efficient way is to use computerized software and set up reminders for follow-up calls, meetings, letters, appointments or anything else you deem important. Use this software to track which sources, ads and letters are producing the most leads and the most productive leads. Record how much money it costs you to find a lead in your market, and how many leads it is taking you to find a customer. Keep your database clean and accurate.

How can a home inspector get to know the local market and competition?

O'Malley: Knowing your local market will help you establish what you need to do in terms of pricing and competition, or what your specific niche is going to be. Get to know the real estate agents in your area. Collect flyers and brochures of other inspectors in your market. Check the internet, check professional home inspector association websites, and ask a real estate agent for a list of preferred inspectors in your area.

Know and evaluate your competition. What report format are they using — computerized or paper reports? Are they delivering their reports onsite? How long does it take to get the reports done? Are they using digital photos to give the client a visual description of what's being purchased? Does your competition have all the insurance you do such as E & O Insurance with Realtor® indemnification and general liability coverage? Are they as professional as you? Did they go through a formal training program before becoming a home inspector? Is their pricing fair?

How can good marketing tools be employed when working with clients?

O'Malley: The quality of your service counts. Remember to verbalize that quality to your client. Focus on trust and professionalism. Add value to your inspections versus reducing the price; people

buy when they are comfortable with what they are purchasing regardless of price.

Word-of-mouth marketing is the best way to get your name out there. Give people something to talk about, and ask them to spread the word. When performing a home inspection, go above and beyond from start to finish. Create a positive experience that exceeds the customer's expectations. Make your company worthy of referrals. Decide what it is that you want people to say about your service, provide quality service, and most of all treat people with respect. Word-of-mouth marketing fuels success.

What's the most important way to keep marketing efforts on target?

O'Malley: Proper time management allows you to take some measure of control over your marketing. Pre-planning your marketing activities will help your days become ordered. Set a goal as to what you want to achieve daily, and go for it. This will help you be more in control of your destiny. Time management also helps with productivity and confidence; and it can make your daily tasks more fun. Most importantly, time management gives you the ability to meet your goals. It is nearly impossible to meet your home inspection marketing goals when you fail to properly manage your time. Something always comes up, or you spend too much time on frivolous tasks, eating away time that should go toward meeting your goals.

What other advice can you offer on marketing for home inspectors?

O'Malley: Stay positive through any and all obstacles you may encounter through your life and career. Seek help and support from family and friends, and you will reach your business goals before you know it.

For more home inspection business marketing tips and how to run a profitable home inspection business, purchase a copy of O'Malley's book, ["Marketing & Operating a Profitable Home Inspection Business."](#)

Kevin O'Malley, an education and real estate industry veteran, is the author of the AHIT book, "Marketing & Operating a Profitable Home Inspection Business." He also is the co-founder and CEO at Home Owners Network.