

FOR CONTRACTORS · MARKETING

The Contractor Marketing System

The marketing department a contracting company runs on: know what a job is worth, become the obvious choice, own Google, run ads with stop rules, win back past customers, and measure every channel on jobs, not clicks.

18 chapters · Scoreboard workbook · Templates + AI prompts · 90-day plan

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What's inside

Work through it in order the first time: the early chapters cost nothing and make every paid chapter cheaper. The **Scoreboard Workbook** and the **Templates and AI Prompt Pack** that came with this guide put each chapter to work.

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About this guide

This guide was written by Alex Babko, owner of Vision Flooring LLC in Everett, Washington: 20+ years of running a contracting business since 2006, first remodeling and now flooring, with 3,800+ clients behind us. It is not theory. It is how we run our own company today, what we tried and dropped, and what we would do first if we started over, written so you can use it in yours.

Everything in this guide comes from our own marketing department: the scoreboard we keep, the tagged links on every post, the win-back messages we send, the Google and Facebook campaigns we set up, the Reels and carousels we post, and the premium positioning kit we use to reach higher-end homeowners. We are a flooring company, so most examples are floors, but every chapter works the same for any home service contractor. Where we quote one of our own results, we say so; where a rule comes from a platform, the source is at the back.

> ⚠ **General business information, not legal, tax or financial advice**
> Laws, platform rules and prices differ by state and change over time. Where this guide touches contracts, lending, taxes, employment or advertising rules, it explains how things usually work and the questions to ask; your attorney, accountant, licensing agency and each platform's current rules come first. Check the sources at the back for the latest versions.

How to use it

- Read it once start to finish, then work through it in order: each chapter builds on the one before. Every chapter starts with **"The short version"**.
- Boxes marked **AI prompt** are ready to copy into Claude, ChatGPT, Gemini or any other assistant. The same prompts are in the files that came with this guide, so you don't have to retype them.
- Words in [square brackets] are placeholders: replace them with your own facts. Never let a tool fill them in with guesses.

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CHAPTER

01

The marketing system at a glance

Most contractors don't have a marketing problem. They have a random–marketing problem: a boosted post one month, a lead site the next, business cards in a drawer, and no way to tell which of it brought the jobs. A system fixes that, and it starts with things that cost nothing.

THE SHORT VERSION

- Revenue is leads × close rate × average job. Marketing works on all three, not only on leads.
- Five parts work together: your numbers, your position and proof, being found, reaching people, and converting and keeping them. Measurement runs through all five.
- Free channels first (Google profile, reviews, past customers, follow–up), paid channels second, as small tests with stop rules.
- Judge every channel on jobs won, never on clicks, likes or "exposure".

Why random marketing fails

Random marketing has three problems. It doesn't **compound**: each effort starts from zero instead of building on the last one. It can't be **measured**: when a job comes in, nobody knows which of five things brought it, so nothing gets better. And it is usually **reactive**: you spend when the schedule is empty, which is exactly when you are least able to wait for results.

A marketing system is the opposite: a small number of channels, each with a job to do, each measured every week, each kept, fixed or stopped on evidence. It is boring on purpose. Boring systems keep working while you are on a job site.

The five parts

1 Numbers
job value
cost per job
capacity
Ch. 2

2 Position & proof
why you
photos, video
reviews
Ch. 3–4

3 Get found
Google profile
website
search, LSA
Ch. 5–6, 10–11

4 Reach people
social, Meta ads
print, partners
lead sites
Ch. 12–16

5 Convert & keep
speed to lead
follow-up
win-back
Ch. 8–9

MEASURE: tagged links · lead source on every call · weekly scoreboard · Keep, Fix or Stop

Each part has its own chapters. Measurement (Chapter 7) runs underneath all of them.

The three numbers behind every dollar

Your revenue from new customers is three numbers multiplied together:

Leads × Close rate × Average job = Revenue

Most contractors only think about the first one. But because they multiply, a modest improvement in each one adds up fast: 10% more leads, closing 10% more of them, at a 10% bigger average job is **33% more revenue** (1.1 × 1.1 × 1.1 = 1.33), without a single extra ad dollar spent on the last two. This guide works on all three:

NUMBER	WHAT MOVES IT	CHAPTERS
Leads	Being found on Google, reviews, ads, social, print, partners, past customers	5, 6, 9–16
Close rate	Answering first, proof, a clear process, follow-up, a professional estimate visit	3, 4, 8
Average job	Positioning, reaching better-fit customers, showing options, premium partners	3, 14

Free before paid

Every channel costs either money or time. Start with the ones that cost time, because they make every paid channel cheaper later: a Google ad sends people to your reviews and photos; a strong profile converts the clicks you pay for.

CHANNEL	COSTS	HOW FAST	HOW LONG IT LASTS
Past customers and old estimates	Time	Days	Repeat every season

CHANNEL	COSTS	HOW FAST	HOW LONG IT LASTS
Speed to lead and follow-up	Time and habit	Immediately	As long as you keep the habit
Google Business Profile and reviews	Time	Weeks	Builds for years
Website pages	Time or a builder	Months to rank	Builds for years
Organic social (Reels, carousels)	Time	Weeks	Mostly days; builds slowly
Google Local Services Ads	Pay per lead	Days after approval	Stops when you stop paying
Google Search ads	Pay per click	Days	Stops when you stop paying
Facebook and Instagram ads	Pay per day	Days	Stops when you stop paying
Print, signs, truck	Money once	Weeks	Months to years
Lead sites	Pay per lead or subscription	Days	Stops when you stop paying

The rules we work by

These eight rules run through every chapter. Copy them onto the first page of your own marketing notes.

1. **Never invent a fact.**
   No made-up awards, numbers, reviews, discounts or deadlines, in any ad, post or message, ever. If it isn't true and provable, it isn't marketing; it's a liability.

2. **Real photos only.**
   Your own jobs. Stock photos are never presented as your work.

3. **Judge on jobs, not clicks.**
   A channel that brings one good job is worth more than one that brings a thousand likes.

4. **Every paid dollar is a test first.**
   Small, fixed budget, with a stop rule written down before you spend.

5. **Every link is tagged, every caller asked.**
   So every lead shows where it came from (Chapter 7).

6. **Answer fast, as a person.**
   The first company to answer clearly usually wins.

7 **The owner approves what customers read.**
Drafts can come from anyone, or from AI; nothing goes out unread.

8 **One review every Friday.**
Fifteen minutes with the scoreboard beats a day of guessing once a year.

How this guide works with the files

PART	WHAT IT DOES	WHEN YOU USE IT
This guide	The why and the how, chapter by chapter, with the AI prompts in place	Read once, then one chapter a week
Scoreboard Workbook	Ten tabs: Numbers, Budget and stop rules, Scoreboard, Lead log, Link builder, Content calendar, Review tracker, Win-back, Listings, Keep-Fix-Stop	Every Friday, and whenever you add a channel
Templates and AI Prompt Pack	Fact sheet template, every prompt, message templates, ad copy starters, negative keywords, partner letters and the leave-behind, post ideas	Copy, paste, and edit to sound like you
Worksheets at the back	Printable versions for the truck and the office	Print what you need

Start here this week
Three free things make every later chapter cheaper: your numbers (Chapter 2), your fact sheet (Chapters 3 and 17), and asking every caller "How did you hear about us?" (Chapter 7). Do them before you spend a dollar on ads.

CHAPTER

02

Know your numbers first

Before you spend a dollar on marketing, know what a job is worth to you, the most you can pay to win one, and how many you can actually handle. These three numbers turn “should I try ads?” into simple arithmetic.

THE SHORT VERSION

- A job is worth its gross profit, not its price. Start from your average job and your gross margin.
- Decide what share of that profit you are willing to spend to win the job: that is your maximum cost per job.
- Multiply by your close rate to get the most you can pay for one real lead.
- Never buy more leads than your crews can turn into finished jobs.

Step 1: what a job is worth

Pull your last 20 finished jobs (or the last six months, whichever is more) and work out three things. The **Numbers** tab of the workbook does the math.

NUMBER	HOW TO GET IT	WHY IT MATTERS
Average job	Total invoiced ÷ number of jobs	The size of what you are selling.
Gross margin	(Revenue − job costs: labor, materials, subs, disposal) ÷ revenue	What is left to pay for the office, the owner, marketing and profit.
Close rate	Jobs won ÷ estimates given	How many estimates it takes to win one job.

No job costing yet?
Use your best honest estimate for now and mark it as a guess. Start costing every job from today (estimate against actual hours and materials). Within three months your numbers will be real, and your marketing decisions with them.

Step 2: the most you can pay to win a job

Decide what share of a job's gross profit you are willing to spend to win it. There is no universal right answer. A company with an empty schedule may accept a higher share for a few months; a busy one should be stricter. Write your number down, because it is the line every channel gets judged against.

A worked example (example numbers, not ours)

$6,000
average job

40%
gross margin, so $2,400 gross profit per job

25%
of gross profit you are willing to spend to win it

$600
maximum cost per job ($2,400 × 25%)

30%
close rate (3 jobs from 10 estimates)

$180
maximum cost per real lead ($600 × 30%)

Now every channel has a target. A Google lead at $90 is a bargain for this company; a lead site charging $250 per lead is losing money unless it closes better than 30%. Without these numbers, both just "feel expensive".

Real leads, not leads
Count only **real leads**: people who want a service you offer, in your area, above your minimum job size. Spam, sales calls, wrong services and tire-kickers outside your area are not leads, and a channel that brings many of them is more expensive than its cost per lead suggests.

Step 3: what a customer is worth over time

The first job is rarely the last. A hardwood refinish customer needs a recoat years later; a happy customer refers neighbors and family; a kitchen client calls you for the bathroom. If you can, estimate how many of your jobs come from repeat customers and referrals. You don't need this number to start, but it explains why the cheapest marketing is a customer who already loves you (Chapter 9), and why a fair price that earns a referral beats a high one that doesn't.

Step 4: capacity

Marketing that brings more work than you can do is worse than no marketing: leads wait, close rates drop, reviews suffer. Before you turn anything on, answer these honestly:

- [ ] How many jobs a week can the crews finish well, right now?
- [ ] How many estimate visits a week can you (or your estimator) actually do?
- [ ] How far out is the schedule booked today? How far out will customers wait?

- [ ] Which months are slow? (Plan the heavier marketing for the four to six weeks before them.)
- [ ] What is your minimum job size and your service area? (Everything outside them is not a real lead.)

Then set a weekly lead target: **jobs you want per week ÷ close rate = estimates needed**, and estimates ÷ the share of real leads that book a visit = real leads needed. If you need 2 jobs a week at a 30% close rate, you need about 7 estimates; if 70% of real leads book a visit, about 10 real leads a week.

Step 5: the budget follows from the numbers

Your monthly marketing budget is simply **jobs you want from paid channels × maximum cost per job**, spread across the channels you are testing. Start with less: a test budget for one or two channels, judged after a set time. Chapter 7 has the stop and scale rules; the **Budget and stop rules** tab of the workbook keeps them in one place.

The words we use (so the numbers mean something)

WORD	MEANS
Lead	Anyone who contacted you about work: form, call, text, message.
Real lead	A lead for a service you offer, in your area, above your minimum, from a real person.
Estimate	A priced proposal you gave (visit or remote).
Job won	An approved estimate, credited to the lead's source.
Revenue won	The total of approved estimates from that source.
Cost per real lead	Spend ÷ real leads.
Cost per job	Spend ÷ jobs won. The number that decides Keep, Fix or Stop.

AI PROMPT

Work out my marketing numbers

```
You are my marketing analyst. Use only the numbers I give you; if one is missing, ask for it instead of guessing.
My last [number] finished jobs totalled $[total invoiced]. Their job costs (labor, materials, subcontractors, disposal) totalled $[total costs]. I gave [number] estimates in that time and won [number].
I am willing to spend [percent]% of a job's gross profit to win it.
Calculate: average job, gross margin, gross profit per job, maximum cost per job, close rate, and maximum cost per real lead. Then tell me how many real leads a week I need to win [number] jobs a week, assuming [percent]% of real leads book an estimate. Show every calculation in a short table.
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END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

The Contractor Marketing System

You just read a few pages. The complete version has everything below, with every worksheet and the spreadsheet.

- ✓ Your numbers first: what a lead and a job are worth to you, the most you can pay for one, and how many you can actually handle
- ✓ Positioning and proof: the one thing customers should remember, a proof inventory, and the claims you must never make
- ✓ Reviews, photos and video: a shot list for every job, the review request that works, and the rules that keep you out of trouble
- ✓ Google Business Profile, Local Services Ads and Search ads, set up step by step, with keyword and negative keyword lists
- ✓ Facebook and Instagram: Reels that reach new people, ads under the housing rules, a posting calendar and caption formulas
- ✓ Speed to lead, follow-up and win-back: scripts for every step, and the free jobs hiding in past customers and old estimates
- ✓ Going upmarket: premium positioning, designer and agent partnerships, door hangers, postcards and the estimate leave-behind

Get the full guide →

visionflooringllc.com/contractor-marketing-system · Instant download · Marketing playbook + workbook + AI prompts

Questions first? Text 425-218-4234; a real person answers.