

# Marketing Your Pressure Washing Business Online

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**T**he days of placing a yellow page ad and going about your business are gone. Advertising your cleaning business has gotten multifaceted, time consuming and complicated. Your website is not alone any more. Google Places, Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, Yelp, Pinterest and Adwords are all beckoning for your attention. And that's not to mention blogging and mobile users. When all you really want to do is go out and clean, how do you manage it all?

## **Prioritize for YOUR Audience**

Just like anything else in life, you have to find out where your time is effective. Sit and think about where your customers are most likely to see you. If you are targeting commercial-only contracts, will posting pictures on Pinterest be effective? Likely not. A residentially-focused cleaning business will do well posting before and after's on Facebook. Instead of blowing hours of time trying to do everything, focus your time on where your market is going to see you.

## **Four Must Haves**

Let's cover four items that are necessary for EVERY cleaning business:

**1. Your Business Website.** Presenting

your business as an efficient, professional organization is important. Regardless of whether you are focusing on commercial, residential, or both, making a good first impression online can determine if a prospect takes the next step in either researching more or calling you. Your website itself has several factors to consider:

- **Design.** A professional design can do wonders for the perception of your company. Many feel this is one area where they can cut corners. But perception can be everything, especially when you are hired to work on someone's largest investment.

Do you care about how your truck and rig look? Do you wear clean, non-bleach-eaten shirts with logos? Why do you do these things? Because the impression you leave with the customer counts. Your website can see more action than you do in any given month, so you should put your best foot forward. It can mean more phone calls, more work, more money.

- **Calls-to-Action.** One of the biggest problems I see on a regular basis is websites with little or no "calls to action." A call to action is a "Call Today! XXX-XXXX" or "Click

Here for a Free Estimate!” Something that tells the user what to do and where to do it.

While it may seem silly to have to tell a prospect what to do, the statistics show differently. People are lazy. Just like most people don't go past page number two on Google, they won't want to surf around your website to find a phone number or contact form. Put it front and center, bold, italicized.

- **SEO.** Easily the most misunderstood, misused, and abused term on the Internet, search engine optimization (SEO) should really be called “customer optimization.” Instead of trying to optimize for robots, optimize for your customers. There are some basics out there that you might need help with (meta tags, inter-linking, heading tags), but the real glory goes to your content. What do your customers want to see and read about?

If you offer no-pressure roof cleaning, tell them why that's the best method to use. Brag about your methods and techniques, not about you and your company. Give them real facts and statistics, how-to articles, etc.

By writing your content for your market, you always stand to do well. Search engines are getting increasingly complicated. They are looking into statistics, such as how long people stay on your site, how many people “bounce” out (click the back button immediately), how many pages they look at on your site, how many people link to your site, and more. It has become more about how valuable your content is, not how often you can squeeze the words “pressure washing” into a pressure washing sentence about pressure washing. :)

- **Ease of Use.** Make your site clear and easy to use. Use drop-down menus to organize your navigation; keep it uncluttered. Your pages should be easy to read, not loaded with long boring paragraphs that no one is going to read. Break it up. Use bullet point lists, buttons with calls-to-action, pictures and other fun things for people to look at.

One more thing: Don't bloat it with junk that doesn't belong (no one cares about your Aunt Suzie's bake sale).

- **Analytics.** Don't operate blind. Track your results. Google's analytics are free and will provide you with more data than you can

digest. Look at your traffic. Where is it coming from? What keywords are people using to find you? What are your most popular pages? What are your least popular pages? Where is traffic originating from? Compare peaks and lows with your actual profits. The actual statistics may surprise you. Use this information to adjust your content and tactics.

**2. Google Places/Google Plus.** Your local



listing on Google will most likely bring you the majority of online traffic. Making sure this listing is optimized will go a long way. Fill out each portion of this listing completely. Add a description using keywords. If a category that you feel is important doesn't exist, create one! Google only requires that you use at least one of their predetermined categories. Use all five!

Another tip is to check that little box that says “Do not show my business address on my maps listing.” This will prevent Google from sending people to an address where you are not likely to be waiting for them. Also, use the “additional details” section to add special services/products you offer. For example, you can add “low pressure washing” or “no pressure roof cleaning” in this area for optimization.

**3. Facebook Business Page.** Whether or



not you like it, your customers ARE on Facebook. There are 955 MILLION active monthly users on Facebook. Presenting

yourself as a professional company is just as important here as any other medium.

- **Interacting on Facebook.** Residential customers love to interact with before-and-after photos. This interaction (liking, commenting or sharing a photo you post) will spread to their friends via their news feed. This is a powerful branding tool. Commercially focused cleaning businesses can present a powerful image by posting pictures of on-site work. Many times your commercial customers have a Facebook page of their own, which you

can tag in those photos.

- **Offers/Promotions.** You can also run “offers” on Facebook, which also have the same interaction/branding effect. Set terms, expiration dates, etc.

- **Contests.** Contests are a great way to interact with fans on Facebook. I wouldn’t recommend doing this until you have built a decent following. Tip: Don’t make the contest/prize about “cleaning services.” Make it about something they are interested in. Ask them to post their funniest pet photo, best summer photo, silliest kid picture, etc. Make the prize something fun as well: movie tickets, gift card, or partner with a local business for a prize. Partnering will extend your reach for a contest, as they will likely promote your business with their fan base as well.

**4. Blog.** I know what you’re going to say: “I’m a pressure washer, not a blogger!” While that IS true, you do have a wealth of knowledge in your head. Why do you use low pressure? What’s wrong with buying bleach from Wal-Mart? Why shouldn’t you pressure wash a shingled roof? What’s the benefit of keeping your commercial sidewalks cleaned? These are questions you think are silly, but most homeowners know nothing about. Tell them.

The second argument I get about blogging is this: “Why should I give away my secrets?” I hate to be the one to break it to you, but they’re not secrets. When you post an article online (hopefully on your website), you help the do-it-yourselfer. That guy is going to power wash his house with his \$200 power washer he bought from Home Depot anyway. Why not give him a useful tip? When he gets himself into trouble (and he will, we all know it), he’s going to have to call someone. By providing him that useful tip, you’ve branded yourself with him as someone trustworthy. Someone who helped him without asking for anything back. That goes a long way. And the content doesn’t hurt your SEO either!

### **Internet Reviews**

The Internet has transformed once not-so-bold people into insane, raging, bad-mouthed maniacs. With that being said, you ARE going to have a negative review online somewhere. Everyone does. What matters is how you respond. Don’t make a sour face. Make lemonade. Here is real example:

“Horrible service. Do not use. They destroyed our yard, hammered our plants with the power washer and left the yard a mess. Completely careless and unprofessional.”

That’s a lost cause, right? Wrong. Do you respond? Do you ignore it? Here’s what NOT to do:

DO NOT ignore the review. This will create the assumption that you don’t care.

DO NOT post a rebuttal/explanation/excuse. No matter what you say in that scenario, it will turn into a he said,/she said, finger-pointing contest and you will look like a terrible business owner.

Here’s how to change the public’s perspective. Respond publicly as the owner with apologies (yes, even if you’re not wrong!), assurances, and promises to make it right. Here’s an example response:

“We apologize greatly for the service and inconvenience we have caused. I assure you that we care about each and every one of our customers. The owner will be contacting you within the next 24 hours to discuss ways to make this right for you. If by chance we miss you, please contact us immediately at xxx-xxx-xxxx. Again, we sincerely apologize for the problems we have caused.”

The response above sets the tone for the prospect that is scrolling through your reviews, deciding whether or not you’re the one to call. A bad review can turn their nose up, but a response like the one above tells them that you care when things go wrong (and they will!). Your company doesn’t ignore the problem. You man up and make it right. Lemonade.

### **Everything Else**

The Internet can be a black hole, sucking your time and resources away while your business suffers. However, it can also be the lifeblood of your business, feeding new leads and reaching repeat customers. Use common sense to tell the difference. Track your results, analyze profits, make adjustments. The Internet is constantly evolving. You should be too.

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