



THE 2021 MARKETING GUIDE FOR CONTRACTORS

What You Need to Know to Grow Your Businesses This Year



By Rieva Lesonsky

Industry Outlook

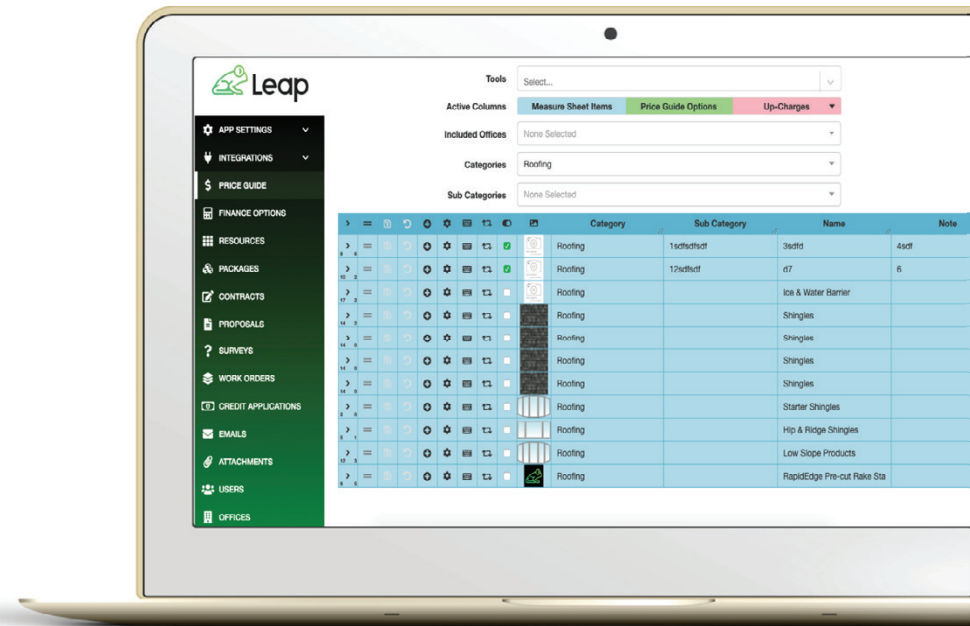
There's a lot of good news for the home services industry for the year ahead. After a challenging year for most American businesses, nearly all the statistics show at least a slight uptick in sales for remodeling, home improvement, and home repairs businesses.

- The [Leading Indicator of Remodeling Activity](#) expects spending for improvements and repairs on owner-occupied homes will rise from 3.5% at the end of 2020 to 3.8% by the end of 2021.
- A Metrostudy/Zonda forecast reveals the number of [big-ticket projects completed](#) nation-wide should reach 14.2 million, an increase of 54,000 to 14.2 million.
- The National Association of Home Builders says [remodeling spending](#) should reach \$285 billion this year.

Technology: The Key to Success

The adoption and use of technology enabled many small businesses to survive the year of COVID-19. Some experts say, in fact, the coronavirus pandemic “forced” small business owners to embrace new technologies at a faster pace than they usually would. This is a good thing since American consumers have already eagerly embraced tech innovations.

Home service businesses need to follow the consumer and take the Discovery Journey.



The Discovery Journey

Like all journeys, the Discovery Journey for consumers has a starting point—search. When consumers want something, they sit down at their computers or pick up their phones and look for what they need.

The numbers are astounding. Google alone averages 40,000 searches every second. And most of those searches, nearly 52%, come from smartphones.

But consumers are not the only ones on a journey. Business owners are on a Discovery Journey of their own—but they're looking for customers, in addition to solutions. Top lead generation experts say the best tools to get you to your destination are a website, email marketing, and search engine optimization.

To find what you're seeking—customers—you need to be where they are—at the end of their search. This, according to [DialogTech](#), is the percentage of consumers that search for specific home service providers:

- 65% home remodelers
- 64% painting
- 62% roofing
- 62% HVAC repair
- 58% electrical
- 54% plumbing



On Google alone, every month there were (these are pre-pandemic numbers):

- 4.2 million+ online searches for home builders & design-build firms
- 2.8 million+ online searches for plumbers
- 1.7 million+ online searches for contractors
- 1.2 million+ online searches for roofing services
- 660,000+ online searches for remodelers

For consumers to find you—you need to be findable. Their search takes them to the internet, which means you need a website to be discovered. Unfortunately, 35% of small business owners believe their business is too small for a website. That is not true.

Having your own website gives you control over your business and provides customers with access to you. The Boston Consulting Group says companies that actively engage online can expect to grow 40% faster than they would without an online presence.

And social media is not a substitute for a website. You have to use their design, follow their rules. You're driving consumers to their site. It's not about your business—it's about theirs.

Make it Mobile

Your website needs to be mobile-friendly, which means it must load quickly. Slow load times frustrate consumers, and they move on to another company. Photos, especially before and afters, are important in your business, so make sure they're optimized as well.

You need to make sure your site is secure. If your site is not an HTTPS (S stands for secure), Google Chrome, the largest web browser, displays "Not Secure" in the search bar, where scares many consumers away.

Mobile page speed is a search engine ranking factor. This means if your site loads slowly, your company is being penalized in the organic rankings on Google and other search engines. Not sure if your site is too slow? Go to [Test My Site](#)—it's free—to find out.



Completing and sending bids before they leave their customer's driveway has saved time and improved their customer experience.



The owners of this family-owned home exterior remodeling business have achieved immense success, even in a limited market.

- Using Leap's pricing and measure sheet automation, they increased their average job cost 3x
- Leap's visual document features make presentations and contracts look very professional
- Completing and sending bids before they leave their customer's driveway has saved time and improved their quality of life!
- Taking photos and adding sketches to the contract "Wow's" their customers



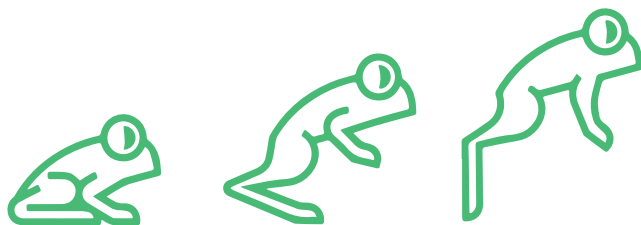
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Marketing Tactics

Marketing is truly the key to success for businesses of any size. It helps companies:

- Build brand awareness
- Explain & inform
- Attract customers
- Increase sales
- Form relationships
- Improve engagement

Consumers do business with people they know, like, and trust. Keep that in mind as you deploy these marketing techniques, strategies, and tactics.



Email Marketing

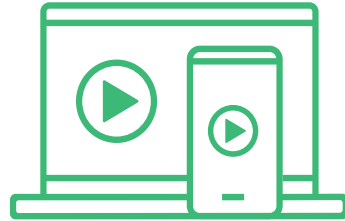
The most effective marketing method is email, generating \$44 for every dollar spent. Most emails are opened on mobile devices, so make sure to optimize your customer emails for mobile viewing.

Some tips for effective email marketing:

- Emails with personalized subject lines are 26% more likely to be opened, according to Campaign Monitor.
- Including a call-to-action button instead of a link boosts conversion rates by as much as 28%.
- Keep your subject lines short; [eight words are ideal](#).
- Sending it from a person's name, rather than a general email address or company name, can [increase open rates](#) by as much as 35%.
- Adding videos to your emails can increase click-through rates by 300%.
- Don't use all caps or overuse exclamation points: An outreach email is never life or death, so a subject line that screams "**IMPORTANT!!!**" only hurts your credibility and makes you seem desperate.

Video Marketing

The annual [Wyzowl's State of Video Marketing Survey](#) reveals that almost 80% of businesses think video marketing positively impacts their sales, with 84% saying video is an effective lead generator.



When measuring success, most businesses (63%) consider video engagement the top metric. Views or plays were a close second (58%). The two biggest video platforms are YouTube and Facebook.

This year, 86% of businesses say they plan to use video as a marketing tool, and 87% expect to get a positive return on investment (ROI) for their efforts.

Direct Mail



Direct mail has made a comeback in the last few years because younger people don't consider it junk mail. It stands out because they get hundreds of emails a day and don't get a lot of actual mail.

Design your direct mail should be designed like Instagram posts—keep the text brief and use eye-catching photography. It's very shareable and has a lifespan of about 17 days. Check out the [USPS Every Door Direct Mail program](#) for a cost-effective way to deliver your direct mail.

Social media

Too many small businesses think social media is a waste of time. It's not. It's an excellent way for a company to build awareness, attract new customers, and cement relationships with current clients. And it's free to use (though it will cost you time).

One of the most popular uses for social media is customer service. Consumers want access to customer service when it's convenient for them, not when it suits you. Recent [customer experience research](#) shows nearly 60% of consumers prefer companies that offer non-voice-based customer service options—including social media.

Social media can be a bit overwhelming. To help, [ConstantContact](#) created a social media plan for the home services industry.

Step 1: Reserve your business name on all the major social channels

You don't need to post on all the major social platforms, but you should reserve your name on them, so no one else can use it.

For home services companies, set up these accounts in this order:

- Facebook
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Twitter

For home builders, the most effective approach is:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Houzz
- Pinterest

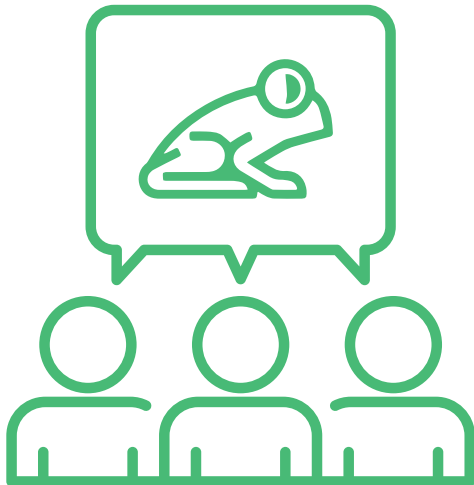
Step 2: Choose a channel and start engaging with your audience

Trying to be active everywhere right away will leave you overwhelmed. So start with one channel—you can always add more later. (If you already have a personal account on the social platform, build one specifically for your business. It takes time to build an audience, so be patient and keep posting.

Step 3: Post strategically

Social media can become a growth engine for home services and construction businesses when they post content that accomplishes three goals:

- Builds awareness
- Serves customers
- Drives action



Step 4: Develop a content calendar

One of the reasons it's so easy to get overwhelmed by social media is figuring out what to post. Advance planning takes the stress away.

Here's what a [social media content calendar for a home services business](#) might look like:

- Sunday: inspirational quote about family, home, inspiring spaces, etc.
- Monday: link to a new blog post
- Tuesday: DIY tip
- Wednesday: share a community event
- Thursday: behind-the-scenes with our team
- Friday: family fun suggestions
- Saturday: highlight favorite home products/brands

There are a lot of tools, some free, that help you schedule posts ahead of time. You don't have to do this yourself, but you should only allow people your trust to post on your social pages.

Rating & Review Sites

Consumers increasingly rely on rating and review sites to help them make purchasing decisions. In fact:

- 88% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations from people they know
- 93% read online reviews before buying
- 86% read reviews for local businesses

These sites can be a valuable part of your marketing arsenal. Here's how to use them effectively:

1. Ask for online reviews

- 68% of customers will leave a review if asked. But don't solicit good reviews in exchange for money or services. That's unethical.

2. Respond to online reviews

- Monitor your reviews and respectfully respond to each one.
- If there's a negative review, offer to take the discussion off-line to investigate further. This shows you're proactive about giving good customer service and that you're open to their perspectives.

3. Share online reviews in your communications. Use them:

- In company communications
- In employee recruitment efforts
- Share customer success stories internally



Accurate Estimates, Clean & Crisp Look for the Customer, Plus Ease of Use for the Sales Reps



"The Leap platform takes away human error, helping us control out-of-stock items and creating measuring sheets instantly with line items and pricing. Using Leap has made our customer's experience better by reducing cancellations due to change orders. Our sales reps now have more time as they can instantly transfer contracts and focus on their next appointment."

Michael Lyons,
Corporate Sales Trainer

Long Roofing is part of the Long Fence and Home family of brands. Since 1945, they have held their work to higher standards of innovation, craftsmanship, and passion, becoming one of the Mid-Atlantic region's premier home service companies.

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Resources

There are a lot of resources to help you better navigate the world of digital marketing. Here are a few:

Online Business Directories

A business directory is an online list of businesses within a specific industry, niche, location, or category. Being listed in one helps your business get web traffic, generates leads, improves your SEO and Online Reputation Management (ORM).

Top 20 online business directories, from [Hubspot](#):

- 1. [Facebook](#)
- 2. [Apple Maps](#)
- 3. [Google My Business](#)
- 4. [LinkedIn Company Directory](#)
- 5. [Bing](#)
- 6. [Yelp](#)
- 7. [Better Business Bureau](#)
- 8. [Foursquare](#)
- 9. [MapQuest](#)
- 10. [HubSpot](#)
- 11. [Yellow Pages](#)
- 12. [Angie's List](#)
- 13. [Yahoo! Local](#)
- 14. [Manta](#)
- 15. [Merchant Circle](#)
- 16. [Super Pages](#)
- 17. [Yellow Book](#)
- 18. [Thumbtack](#)
- 19. [Local.com](#)
- 20. [Kudzu.com](#)

Best Ratings & Reviews Sites for Home Service Businesses, from [Online Visibility Pros](#)

- Google My Business
- Angie's List
- Yelp
- Yahoo! Local Listings
- Better Business Bureau
- Facebook Ratings & Reviews
- Houzz
- Home Advisor
- Porch

Top 5 Building & Construction Lead Gen Sites, from [BrightLocal](#)

- 1. [Home Advisor Pro](#)
- 2. [Network](#)
- 3. [BuildZoom](#)
- 4. [The Blue Book](#)
- 5. [Contractors.com](#)

About the Author:

Rieva Lesonsky is president and CEO of two companies that focus on small business and entrepreneurship—[GrowBiz Media](#) and [SmallBizDaily.com](#), an award-winning small business website. She's a nationally-known speaker, best-selling author, and authority on entrepreneurship who has covered the industry for more than 40 years. Before starting GrowBiz Media, she was the long-time editorial director of Entrepreneur magazine.

Lesonsky has written several books about small business, including the best-selling Start Your Own Business.



BENEFITTING THE WHOLE COMPANY



Business Owner

- Controls the price and eliminates be-back
- No more chicken scratch – everything is digital
- Cut time from sale to production

Controller/Operations Manager

- Eliminates Errors
- Update resources once and get distributed everywhere
- No mis-orders or discontinued items

Sales Manager

- Better homeowner experience
- No double-data entry – enter it once to use in multiple formats
- Easy digital documents – develop estimates in minutes

WHAT IS LEAP

- Leap is a subscription-based cloud software that companies of all sizes can use to digitize their business.
- Leap integrates with the top home improvement software and brings everything together in one place. #BetterTogether
- Get rid of redundancies and errors that slow down your sales process – digitize your entire sales process! Estimates, contracts, digital documents, on the spot financing, and more!
- Get a leg up on your competition and scale and grow your business – all while simplifying the sales process.



STACEY BARLOW
Sales & Marketing AM
RetroFoam™



"The contracts are clear and we've reduced countless errors. That is huge! We've saved a lot of time in process improvements for our sales team and for our office"

LEAP PRO

Manage Your Appointments

- Easy flow of appointment information from CRM to Sales
- Easy to access digital presentations, brochures and pitch books
- Send your resources to your customers for them to keep and share with others

Powerful Contracts

- Easily combine all your documents into one digital proposal
- Branded digital estimates and contracts e-mailed to homeowners during the sales process
- Send completed contracts from sales to production immediately

Credit Application and Payments

- Capture and process electronic payments
- Offer financing from multiple lenders and get rapid updates

LEAP PREMIUM

All Leap Pro features PLUS

Customizable Reusable Products

- Rapidly update pricing and remove out of stock items
- Flexibly customize packages from the home office
- Establish standard Pricing calculations and formulas for each job

Measure and Diagram Jobs

- Branded measuring sheets with ability to sketch and draw
- Avoid separate data entry and import aerial measurements directly into contracts

Advanced Features

- Resulting leads and automatically sending reminder prompts
- Log all history and activity during the sales call
- Rehash appointments with the data from the old estimates

The team at Leap would love to learn more about your business and see if Leap might be a good fit for you.

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