

# Transcript

Krystal Hobbs 0:04

Welcome to Beyond the Tools, the podcast that helps contractors attract more leads, grow their business, and finally get off the tools. In each episode, you'll discover marketing tactics that work. You'll get actionable insights from other successful contractors, and connect with experts to help you grow. I'm your host, Krystal Hobbs, owner of a social media agency that helps contractors attract and convert more leads. Get ready to take your business to the next level so you can finally enjoy the fruits of your hard labor. Ready, let's go!

Hey, contractors, welcome back to Beyond the Tools. I'm your host, Crystal Hobbs. And I realized with all these incredible guests that we've had, over the past few weeks, it's been a hot minute since I've come on here to chat with you guys personally. And, at this stage in the company, I'm doing all of our sales, and that's 100% our focus, I'm not really doing much client work these days, I leave that to my team. But working on getting things streamlined, so that I can bring on a salesperson. For now, I'm really enjoying that process, I get to talk to five or 10 contractors a week, and have these really in-depth conversations about where their business is, where they want to go, what's holding them back from getting there. And all too often I'm seeing the same common pitfalls when it comes to contracting companies. So that's what inspired today's episode; I wanted to delve in and share what I'm hearing with you because, first and foremost, I want you to know you're not alone if you're experiencing any of these difficulties. It's something we're seeing across the board with a variety of companies. And I also wanted to provide some strategies to help you work smarter, not harder, so you can truly make a difference and be like the successful growing firms you aspire to be. And I know a lot of you listening are well on your way, some of you are already really doing fantastic. So if you're at a further stage in your business, like a lot of our clients, then you may listen to this and say, "Okay, I remember when I was there." But I think some of these things may even apply to where you are in your business, or at the very least, might be a helpful reminder of what's gotten you to the point that you are today.

So, whether you're new to the business, in the process of growing your team, or you're a very successful home service or contracting firm, I hope that anything I offer here today will really help you to continue that development and success that you're

experiencing. So the first common pitfall that I see, the first set of five, is trying to do too much yourself. And believe me, this is a struggle for every business owner. For every small team, you're used to being a bit scrappy and having to wear different hats. And that's totally okay at certain stages in the business. But if you're serious about growth, and you want to get to that next level in your business, then you're going to need to bring in your team, whether that's hiring in-house employees, or seeking out the right experts to help you. So let me give you an example. The other day, I was speaking with a contractor, who was saying they're a pretty small, nimble team they're trying to grow. Right now he's doing all the sales in his business and all the lead follow-up. So when I express that's a lot of work. One of the things that we do as part of our HVAC lead driver system is that we provide an appointment setting team so they will call all your leads on your behalf to be able to sift through those people. And make sure that you can focus on the ones that are most beneficial to you, the ones that are serious about getting your services. So when I said that, he said, "Wow, that sounds really great, but I think I'd rather just call the leads myself. I want to make sure that I'm having those conversations and learning about what they want." Again, in certain stages of your business, that's totally fine. But if you want to add fuel to the fire and bring in all of these leads for your firm, it's a lot of work to be able to contact all of those people yourself; you'll have a lot of people not answering, and you'll have to call them many times throughout the week. And is it something you actually want to do? Or should your efforts be directed elsewhere? As a result, this is a relatively prevalent problem. Let me tell you about something, I just gave up on my business which was quite difficult for me to do. But, what a relief.

So I do a lot of social media training; I'll work one-on-one or with a group of small company owners to teach them how to use social media more successfully for their business. Most of the time, that meant at least an hour and a half, often two, three hours, and sometimes a full day of my week, and at this point in the company, I'm really focused on bringing in new clients; we want to work with 50 contractors in the next three years, that's the goal; we're trying to get to 50 growing contractors across Canada and the United States. So completing those social media sessions isn't getting me any closer to my vision for the company. So when I hired personnel, I hired our social media specialist, who is just fantastic; she has an incredible history in marketing and social media. In addition, I dabble in graphic design, photography, video, and a variety of other skills. So when I brought her on, and you know, and working with, I've got my own mentors, and I'm in masterminds as well to try to grow the firm. "This training session

you're having on Monday has got to be your final one," I said. I've been doing this for eight years. This has now become an important aspect of my career and my identity within the organization. And it's been all about personal branding and putting my face out there. I was quite attached to it, not just because I enjoyed the work, but also because I believed it was attracting more people to us. That was a difficult thing for me to let go of. But I realized that what brought me here wasn't going to bring me there. So I had no choice but to discontinue the social media training. The great news is that I have a very capable employee who I believe will outperform me. So I'm extremely pleased to see her progress; I had everything documented, all of the protocols in place, and there was no reason why I couldn't hand off this. So, if you're at that point in your business where you have a plan and a goal of where you want to go. And if some of the things you're doing today aren't going to help you get there, or if someone else on your team, an agency, or a marketer you're working with can do that piece, then here is my verbal nudge for you to let it go. This brings me to the second most common pitfall I see. That is not the result of having optimized processes. So one of the reasons I was able to let go of this part of my job was that we had everything in place; I had a detailed process of how I prepare for a training session, how I communicate with the client, down to some of the emails I send the contract, the slide decks, the whole works, everything mapped out, plus recordings of how I did each of those steps. So, if you intend to let some things go in your business, now is the time to start documenting them. So I use Loom, a Chrome plugin that allows me to record my screen while I work. So, if that's the case for you, and you're doing more office or back-end work, document those processes. If you're looking to hire a salesperson, record your sales calls, whatever you were doing, even if it was in the field, and I mean you, I've seen this, especially since this is probably one of the first things you hand off, right? It's all within; even the title of the show implies that it goes beyond the instruments.

If you're working in the field and have an apprentice or a new employee that you're training, give them checklists or a step-by-step guide on how to accomplish things, anything that you can document and show someone. But if you have that paper, it will live forever, and it will also be something they can refer to at any moment. If you acquire that, the next technician in the door will have that same checklist, and it will share some quality across the board. So you're attempting to streamline your procedures while also documenting everything. While I'm on the subject, I've noticed that while most businesses have some sort of system in place, there are still a number of businesses that rely only on spreadsheets. So attempt to include some software into your firm as

well, because it will make a significant difference. So, even on the lead, we give all of our clients a CRM so that they can track all of their leads and log their sales calls in there with a unique number. As a result, every client and customer communication is documented. Then there's automation, so when a lead comes in, they get a text message, an email confirmation, and online booking if they want to make their own appointments. So, once again, you're attempting to eliminate some of the manual processes and truly streamline all of your processes. The third typical common pitfall I encounter is failing the sniff test. So, if you want to listen to Episode 13, I talked about the rusty van effect a little bit. But just yesterday, I was on the phone with a construction business that specializes in home additions. And their website was stunning, as I discovered when I visited it. I was amazed by the photographs, fantastic customer video testimonials, they had a nice logo, everything seemed pretty sleek, I was truly delighted. Then, when I looked at their Facebook and Instagram profiles, I noticed that they had an outdated logo that didn't fit properly, as if it had been ripped off. Everything appeared to be a flyer, and they were promoting special specials such as \$2,000 off and the like. So, it was a complete mismatch. There were also no reviews on Facebook or Google. So, if I were a consumer planning on doing an in addition to my home, and I go to your website, I'm like, wow, and then I check you out on social media, My reaction was, "Oh", you don't want to have that reaction, right? You want to have a consistent presence across the board that is appealing and sets the expectation for the quality of your work. So if I see that website, I'm going to be there because it's gorgeous. If their website is so good, then their work must be of the same caliber. But now, if I'm on Facebook and there's an Instagram, and you've got coupons and lousy graphics, and your logos are hacked off and outdated, I'm going to have a completely different image. And now I'm worried, and I could look for a competitor instead. So you really want to make sure that everything is consistent, professional, and gives off the feel of what it's like to work for your organization. So, as Megan Bedford mentioned in the previous episode, walk through your online presence, even call your company, and go through your own email sequences as if you were a client, and do you keep the sent across the board? Is it the same everywhere? Do you give the same impression no matter how a customer approaches you?

The fourth common pitfall that I observe is failing to nurture current and potential consumers. So, by nurturing, I mean having certain automatic checkpoints throughout your marketing and sales funnel to continue to create that relationship with the customer. So, for example, let's suppose you want to make sure that when a lead

comes in, they get an email immediately away, at the very least an email saying that their inquiry has been received. Because you guys get a poor rap, especially in the trades, because a lot of people feel, or have been stood up by contractors, or haven't been able to get ahold of someone. So, if someone reaches out and it's already acknowledged, that's a checkpoint, right? So, present and potential clients are not nurtured. So, when that lead comes in, you want to send them an email or a text message right soon. Ideally, you've already created some sequences. So what I mean by that is, over a period of a week or two, they are getting different emails, different text messages from the company, and they shouldn't all be - buy right now work with us right now, though, some of that direct messaging is, of course, okay, but you want to sprinkle in there, some customer education, you want to tell them about the projects you're most proud of, you want to share some customer testimonials and reviews, so that you are continuing to build trust with that customer. So those are your leads, that's just one simple way that you can nurture them. There are also retargeting advertisements. So, if someone gets a lead or visits your website, it's similar to when you're on Amazon and you're looking at a book or whatever, and then you see an ad for that later on Facebook or Google. That is remarketing, also known as retargeting. So you want to make sure that once someone enters your world, whether online or otherwise, they begin to see you everywhere. So, we refer to this as the be everywhere effect. So something like that may really help to nurture that customer, they're getting emails, texts, someone on your team is contacting them, or an appointment setter is calling them. And they're seeing your advertisements on Facebook, Instagram, and anywhere else you're advertising online. This definitely presents a picture of you as a competent, proactive, calm organization that understands what they're doing, doesn't it? You've definitely got your act together. That is the type of impression you want to make. And then there are your existing clients, especially if you're a track or another firm that has repeat business, and we work with a lot of HVAC companies. So, I know you frequently have an annual maintenance agreement that people may sign up for. So you don't want to forget about your current clients. If someone had a new installation, you want to make sure that you're checking in, and when the year is up, you can have that automatic so that they get an email saying, Hey, do you need your annual tune-up? This is what we do. By the way, did you know that you can sign up for a package that covers all of your maintenance, or whatever the specifics of your package are. So, if you have it as part of your workflow, you'll be passively pulling in fresh revenue whenever someone reaches that step, right? Remember to nurture your potential consumers, as well as your present customers. So, for example, one of our home builder clients had a lot of leads where we

asked them what their budget was. And some weren't a suitable fit at the time since their minimum price for a property was, say, \$300,000. Okay, so when they went to introduce a new offering in which they were providing townhouses at a lot cheaper price point, we went back and built a list of all the leads that were inside the lower budget range that they couldn't serve previously. And now, with this new product, we've returned to those folks.

So there are always possibilities to re-engage leads that weren't a good fit when you first drew them in, but maybe a terrific fit now. The final mistake I see home service and contracting companies make is not diversifying their lead sources. This is true regardless of where you are in your business's life cycle. So, in the early stages of your business, you're probably relying heavily on referrals. And, to be honest, I speak to organizations every day that have been in business for 2030 years and rely heavily on referrals for leads. However, as Bob Deeks stated in one of our audio interviews, relying on recommendations is exceedingly risky because they are unpredictable; you never know when a reference will come. Obviously, you want your clients to spread the word about you and refer their friends and family to you. So, yes, that is something you can encourage. However, if you're attempting to take your business to the next level, you don't want to rely solely on referrals since you'll see significant ebbs and flows in terms of your business. Instead, you want to have sustainable development, growth that you can bank on leads coming in when you need them. So, if that's the case for you, you should stop relying on referrals and start doing some online marketing, whether it's through Google, social media, or any other online source, to ensure that whenever you need consumers, you can turn on that faucet. That is a large part of what we do at reflecting my agency. We're leveraging social media to proactively attract potential consumers so that in this business, whenever you need leads, which is pretty much all the time, you can bring those leads in a regular manner. And recently, many of the calls I've received from more experienced companies have indicated that they are getting leads from Google or from paid Google ads or SEO, which is fantastic because they've already moved well beyond relying on referrals, and they have an online lead source that is working for their business. But what if you're not getting the volume you need from that lead source, or if expenses are creeping up, as I hear all the time, my Google cost per lead has really gone out of hand, or if traffic appears to fall at certain times of the year, which I can't control, and I'm not bringing in enough leads. So, if that's the case, make sure you have additional sources of leads. That is one of the primary reasons why many businesses choose us to handle their social media promotion.

Because you are not reliant on individuals searching for you, you can get in front of them proactively, before they even consider going to a competitor. So those are the top five typical errors that I see contracting organizations have when attempting to reach the next level of growth in their business. So, to summarize, number one is trying to do too much by yourself or within your small team. Number two is not having streamlined processes, which not only allows you to delegate but also ensures that you have quality in everything you do. Three are failing the sniff test. So, not presenting a consistent impression to a consumer across your entire marketing and sales process. Four is failing to nurture present or potential consumers, and five is failing to diversify your lead sources. So, if anyone is listening, please drop us a message on Instagram at [reflectivemarketing](#). You'll notice me there. And all of our episodes that go beyond the tools. Send me a message and let me know which of these resonated with you the most. What is it that you are currently struggling with within your business? Is there something going on with your business that I haven't covered here? I'd love to hear from you. So please shoot us a direct message on Instagram [@reflectivemarketing](#). We're also on Facebook, TikTok, and whatever other social media platform you prefer. Thank you so much for taking the time to listen. And if this resonated with you, please share it with your contractor friends outside the tools. I'll talk to you again in the upcoming episode.

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