

2.3 Marketing Budget

Advertising

Your business plan budget should have a column with money set aside for your marketing efforts, so this section will help guide you into allocating that money. There isn't a right or wrong answer to allocating advertising dollars, but you'll find out in the future if you made the right decisions. The following section is a guideline for figuring out how you're going to spend valuable money.

Keep track of what you do. Don't put money into advertising and wonder why results are good or bad. You should know how to pivot when needed and where to relocate money when needed.

Knowing your customer is important, as stated in the business plan. Once you've figured out who they are it's time to make some educated guesses of how they get their news, information, where they socialize, what & how they trust, where they work, and any other information you can collect on their general demographic. Once you know these answers you can start to get pricing on the media spaces that they use and trust.

For example, if you want to reach a 20-40 year old audience, you probably wouldn't take an ad out in a newspaper. You would probably think of social media, such as Instagram. This isn't a revelation in marketing, but it is in regards to your budget. Social media doesn't have to cost anything if you are savvy with it, but a newspaper can cost hundreds of dollars per month. If your customer is in the 20-40 year old demographic, you could be spending thousands of dollars a year on a newspaper ad that doesn't bring you any business.

Facebook has a lot of features for businesses to use. Take advantage of anything that is offered for free and see what advertising through them can do for you. Their algorithms and ability to know every person on Facebook also gives you the power to place ads directly in front of people that you want to see your ad. You can adjust the words used, job descriptions they list, geographical zone, and so on. They also help with your ability to be found online because of their dominating presence. Search Engine Optimization (below) will get a bit further into detail as to how this works.

Television probably isn't something to consider unless you have become a national brand, but Youtube videos can be good as it is a top search engine for people finding companies that they need to hire. A Youtube channel can cost you time and video production, which can all be done yourself with help from online tutorials, trial and error, or books, such as ebook.inhousevideo.com.

Newspapers have too large of an audience that doesn't (or possibly have never had) graffiti. The audience for newspapers is also more likely to be out of the working class and into retirement. Graffiti removal in the general news also tends to work against a city's program to prevent graffiti. Many studies have shown that graffiti in the general media creates more graffiti in a community. It can be seen as a challenge to people who do graffiti if they see it is being removed.

Fortunately, the mass general population of today uses one central source for all information, the internet. It can carve out your exact demographic as the Facebook section described, but it can also bring your company up only when a search has been performed. If someone doesn't meet the requirements you have for a customer's search on Google, you won't be

brought up and charged for it. This is so custom and helpful for your niche company that you cannot afford to ignore this offer.

If you're not comfortable with doing your own SEO (Search Engine Optimization), which most people wouldn't be in your situation because you're getting into graffiti removal and not computer sciences, you can find many companies that you can contract this work out to. For example, [fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com) has a lot of freelance workers who you can choose from to do this work for you at a great rate. There are many other companies that can provide this work, but get some quotes as this is going to be taken out of your marketing (advertising) budget.

You can allocate money into this portion of your Annual Budget Template from Module 1, but SEO will be covered later in Module 2.5.

Marketing Material

The cost of starting up will be more than your annual costs for marketing because you won't have to purchase a lot of the products annually.

Business Cards: Business cards should last for 2+ years and decals on your vehicles shouldn't need replacing for multiple years. This highlights the importance of getting the information and graphics on them done right the first time. A good business card can be remembered by people because of the quality it has along with design and relevant information. Oversized (same as a credit card aka European style) cards can draw more attention because people will notice there's a difference than other cards they're use to; however, it may not fit into their stack of cards or wallet easily and may get tossed out. This isn't an exact science, but texture seems to be a better way to differentiate yourself from regular cards. Design and information that looks professional is most important as you want people to know the vital information.

Promotions: As a niche company you'll find that broad promotional items can be wasted if they're not given to people who manage properties. If you are to give a company golf shirt to a random person, it may not result in a sale. They also may never be seen wearing it around people who could use your service even. However, if you were to give a golf shirt or 2 to a management company's golf tournament as a door prize or hole sponsor, this could be worth every penny. Small items such as fridge magnets can be good in some industries, such as plumbing companies, but weigh the pros and cons of each decision. Spending money directly on your targeted people, which might not cost a lot annually, may be more valuable than spending 3 times as much on a broad ad campaign that a newspaper is trying to sell you.

If a building owners group, property management company, construction industry, or municipality asks for a sponsorship or help with an event in some way, strongly consider the importance of growing your brand in those circles as they will likely be lifetime customers.

First time customers can be the most expensive to acquire, so when you go after one, try to make sure you aren't spending more than what their lifetime value to your company is. This goes for all of your advertising, but especially when spending more on individual promotional items than blanket advertising spots.

Uniforms: Uniform costs will be an annual expense; however, the initial startup cost will likely be more than your annual upkeep on them. New staff will always bring on more expenses, but as you grow you can forecast what your expenses will be based on what your startup costs were. A lot of companies overlook the importance of uniforms in one way or another. T-shirts

are an easy and cheap uniform, so what does that say to your customer? If you're going to have yourself and/or staff wear a uniform, make sure it's worth putting money into. Looking professional throughout the year will make your company synonymous with being professional.

Besides wearing a sharp hoodie or golf shirt, you will also need to have a uniform for using the pressure washer on a job-site. As suggested in the safety portion (Module 4 Equipment / Safety Gear), you should have a hard hat, steel-toe gum boots, and rubber suit to protect yourself. This is part of the uniform, so if you have multiple people doing this work, make sure they match. Hard hats come in every colour, so match them and the rubber suits to each other. These are little details that look professional when you might be working together.

Decals: Decals generally will only be needed when you bring a new truck/van/trailer into your fleet. Find some general quotes from a few decal shops and work out your budget from there. If you want a splashy full vehicle wrap, but think it's too expensive, find a way around it by wrapping part of the vehicle so it looks finished, but can be completed in year 2. Make sure it is what you want it to be, but don't extend yourself financially because you find it appealing. Who is your target customer and are they ever going to see it? If you prefer working late nights and early mornings to beat the city rush and seasonal heat, then think about the value it will bring versus if many property management companies have offices in a part of town with the most graffiti. Make sure you're always thinking about the customer, whether you're talking to them, or buying decals.