



From the Ground Up: Setting Up Your Marketing Department

Lay the foundation with these five essential investments

Business Development Best Practices Series

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For many construction companies, marketing supports the Business Development department in winning new work. This includes responding to project opportunities through the creation of statements of qualifications, proposals and presentations. Depending on company size, operations staff or team members working in different departments such as HR or Accounting may have marketing responsibilities. In some cases, companies haven't needed a marketing department until now. If you're just setting up your marketing department, planning it to support Business Development is priority No. 1. Here are some tips to help you lay the foundation and set your company up for long-term success.

1. Invest in a Template Design that Reflects Your Company's Brand

Branding is essential in today's marketplace. It tells the story of your company and what the experience might be like for prospects to work with your company. Statements of qualifications and proposals are prime opportunities to reinforce your brand. If you don't have a branded proposal template, start with finding an internal or external resource to design one. Make sure your designer understands your brand and incorporates good design principles. At a minimum, your templates should include a cover, table of contents, section dividers, content pages, resume and project data sheet. Ask your designer to create templates in the software you'll be using (i.e. Microsoft Word or Adobe InDesign). A template gives consistency in your materials and saves you time.

2. Showcase Your People with Tailored Resumes

We're in the people business. Customers want to vet out the individuals they will be working with. Create master resumes for those team members who are typically being included in your proposals. Find out their background, expertise, past projects and education. The more personalized you can make it, the better. You can collect data by creating a standard form for team members to complete or interview them. From there, you can begin to place content into your resume template. Resume details can be updated on an annual basis or as frequently as you like. Customers don't want to read boilerplate information so you'll work to customize it to specific opportunities.

3. Build a Library of Your Project Stories

Project data sheets tell potential customers how experienced your company is in completing projects like theirs. Data sheets are typically one-page and include: name of project, customer name, location, contract amount, schedule completion and customer

reference information. Always include 1-3 images of the project along with a few succinct paragraphs highlighting the scope of work, notable cost and/or schedule savings and other interesting details that show your company's value. This information can be collected from your company's project manager or another key member of the project team. A job site visit can help facilitate the collection of details. Many companies also create a standard form for teams to complete when the project is finished.

4. Give a Hoot About Your Photography

You've heard the saying, "a picture is worth a thousand words." Invest in good photography for your projects to ensure your photos send the powerful message you want to deliver. This kind of investment could range from purchasing a basic camera with automatic features to hiring a professional photographer. A great place to start is with your projects and headshots of your key team members. If you are a self-performing contractor, taking on-site photos of your team members and equipment might be important for your company. Take inventory of the photography you're using and identify areas to improve. Aside from a job site visit, a prospect might only get to see your work through photos. If it's not something you're proud of today, make a change.

5. Manage that Data!

The backbone to any marketing department is its database. The goal is to have a centralized place to go to retrieve the most accurate information available. Types of databases can include resumes, projects and contacts. The key is that you are tracking company information and keeping it up to date. With today's technology, there are a variety of systems to accommodate needs of marketing professionals in the construction industry. Do the research and select one that aligns with your company's goals, priorities and budget.

Laying the foundation for your marketing department takes time and work. Making minor investments and creating simple systems can go a long way in increasing productivity, saving time and elevating your materials. For marketing inspiration from others in the construction industry, visit the Society for Marketing Professional Services on Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/smpsnational/>

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