

Marketing Your Portable Restroom Business



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Marketing is a powerful tool you need to attract customers and build your business.

Marketing gives information to potential customers so they can make smart consumer decisions. It helps you connect with them through a process of awareness, education and invitation. The goal is to get your potential customers to know:

- Who you are (awareness)
- What you do (education)
- Why they should hire you instead of another portable sanitation company (invitation)

You should always be marketing your company. The pros recommend that you consistently invest time and money to truly take advantage of the power of marketing.

Plan ahead for a full year of marketing. Start with a list of the basics (your business mentor can help), then research the costs for design, printing or creation and rates. A rule of thumb is to spend about 10 percent of your revenue per year on marketing.

There are many ways to market your business. The key is finding the right combination of tactics. The basic elements of marketing are:

- Your branding: company name, logo and tagline
- Your advertising: units, vehicle signage, business cards, ads, mailings and email, social media, testimonials and networking
- Your website

Remember, your competitors are marketing right now.

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Your Branding

Who doesn't know famous brands like McDonald's, Apple, Ford, Walmart and Nike? Just by hearing their names, you know what products they sell and the reputation they have.

Just like them, your company has a brand. Your brand is what you do and the way you do it. It's your image. "Branding" is telling your customers about yourself. It's a unique, focused message that communicates your values.

The two most necessary parts of your brand that the public will see most often are your company name and logo. They should make an impression.

COMPANY NAME

Branding begins with the name of your company. The name you choose is important. You want to wear it proudly. It will represent you for a long time, so consider carefully!

Look on the web for examples. Many companies take a similar approach. The most popular company names may include the owner's name (Pat's Portables, Singleton's Sanitation Service), a service quality (quick, reliable, comfortable, clean, fresh, spotless), a geographic service area (Lewisville Porta-johns, Northern Idaho Sanitation) or even a humorous reference to using the bathroom (see below). A bit of imagination can make your name stand out. Ask your family, friends and business mentor for their opinions.

Names of actual portable toilet companies:

- Happy Can Portable Toilets



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- Best Seat In The House
- ASAP Port-A-Pots
- Johnny On The Spot
- Royal Throne
- Tanks Alot
- Oui Oui Enterprises
- Willy Make It?
- Doodie Calls
- A King's Throne

COMPANY NAME

A logo is a symbol or design that identifies the company and appears on its products.

Here are logo examples of local portable sanitation businesses like yours:



Division of Tillet Plumbing Inc.

A distinctive design will set your company apart from the others. Make sure your logo contains your company name, phone number and web address.

Unless you are a professional artist, don't design your own logo, business cards, signs or other branding. A professional graphic

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artist or graphics company will be able to turn your ideas into a clear, sharp design. Contact your local Chamber of Commerce to find the help you will need. Some online printing companies also offer economical logo design.

The first example above also has a tagline (“Ahead with class”). A tagline is a slogan or a very short description of your business. If you want to create a tagline for your business, keep it short and memorable. Keep in mind some of the most famous taglines, such as “Just Do It,” “BMW: The Ultimate Driving Machine” and “The Few. The Proud. The Marines.”

Your Branding

Advertising is something you should do all the time in different ways. Ads and other marketing materials are meant to be seen by the public (your potential customers) to create awareness about your business. Awareness is how business relationships begin.

Advertising can be as simple as an ad, business cards, stickers on your porta-johns and signs on your truck. When you put all of the parts together, it has a “snowball” effect — the longer and more often you use advertising and marketing, the more familiar you become to your audience.

Whatever combination of advertising tools you decide will be the most effective for your business, you will have many options to have the work done with your budget in mind. The graphic artist that designed your logo can also help you design ads. Your local office supply store or online printing companies can produce most of the printed needs, such as business cards and brochures. Your Chamber of Commerce will help you find local companies for larger or more complex marketing needs, such as vehicle graphics. You will also find online companies that offer these services. Ask the companies you work with if they offer a small business startup package. Shop around!

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YOUR UNITS

Your portable sanitation business has one of the best advantages in advertising — the units themselves. Every unit should have a large decal or sticker with your logo prominently displayed. It's free advertising at every site in your service area! Search the internet (try "portable sanitation decals") for companies that specialize in this type of decal.



YOUR VEHICLES

Your logo on your truck and other vehicles is like a portable billboard that travels throughout your service area. The advertising on your vehicle becomes more effective when people see it on a regular basis because they will realize your company is a steady, reliable performer.

Owner-operators like to get creative with the graphics on their vehicles. One business had a big sign on the trailer all summer that said, "We're going to a Party." It was definitely noticed, and he heard comments from hundreds of people!

Keep your units and vehicles clean, because how they look is also a kind of advertising. Appearances matter.

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YOUR BUSINESS CARDS

The benefit of business cards is that they are personal. Your business card is like a handshake or a face-to-face meeting. Even in the world of smartphones, they can make a difference in winning and keeping customers. The key to using business cards is to give them out as often as possible. Always have them on hand — it shows that you are prepared. When you send a bill or a letter as part of your business, include a card.

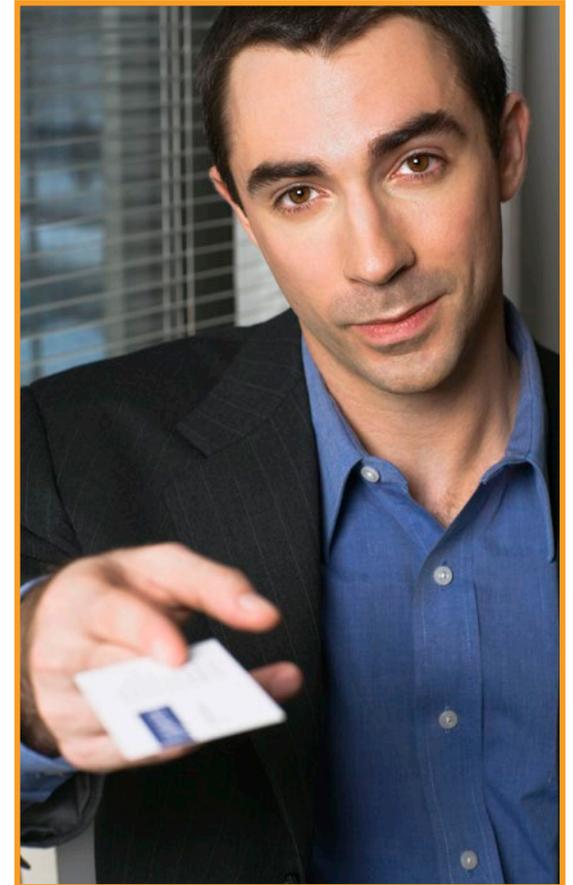
You may also want business envelopes and stationery with your logo to match your business cards.

ADS

You should have a basic ad that you can place in the Yellow Pages (and online Yellow Pages), construction newsletters, real estate guides, Chamber of Commerce newsletters and “Services for Hire” classifieds.

The most effective ads are usually simple. Along with your logo (name, phone, website), you can list your services and advantages, and perhaps add a photo. You can design a slightly different ad to target a specific audience, like the construction market or event and wedding planners.

When placing ads, think ahead. For example, special event planners might start reserving portable sanitation units eight months or so in advance of their busy season.



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MAILING AND EMAILS

When you mail some marketing information to a current or potential customer, it is called direct mail marketing or advertising. Today, direct mail also includes email. It's another helpful resource to maintain a line of communication with your market.

As your business grows, you should create a mailing list of every customer you serve or have served, or every potential customer, and stay in touch with them on a regular basis. You can let them know, for example, that you have added to your service capabilities or are offering a special promotion. When you send any business-related email, you can add your logo to your "electronic signature."

You might even consider using an email marketing service such as Constant Contact, GetResponse or MailChimp.

SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

If you are web savvy, look into using social media sites for small business owners. You can create a company page on Facebook Business and LinkedIn, use YouTube for Business, or get a free business listing on Google My Business.

You may not personally like social media, but it's very important in today's marketplace. It's one of the main tools for your company to get noticed by people searching the internet. Having a social media page does more than just let you post events, blogs and information to your customers. It can also help you get ranked higher by search engines.



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TESTIMONIALS

Testimonials are effective additions to your mailings, website, ads and other marketing. A testimonial is a brief quote from a customer that praises or recommends your company. For example:

"Thanks for your excellent service at our event. Bathrooms were fresh and clean every day. We'll definitely use your company next year!"
-- Jodi M.

Always ask for permission to use a testimonial.

Your Website

In today's competitive business environment, a website is a must.

Your website is 24/7/365 marketing for your business. When people see your company name on your truck or unit, or see your ad, they can go to your website at any time for more information. It shows customers that you are a reputable business with the services and equipment to do the job right — and the more a customer knows about you, the more you stand out from the competition in their minds.

It will put you on the same level as other portable sanitation companies that have websites and give you an advantage over those that don't.

A simple website with perhaps two or three pages is all you need. It will provide basic information about your company, your services, your equipment and your contact information. You can provide a brief history, show photos and add testimonials. The second page could focus on construction services, and the third could be for special events and parties.

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It's easier than ever to create your own website. You don't need a lot of computer experience, and it doesn't cost a lot. It can make a big impact, so it's well worth the time and money you put into it.

Before you start, check out some of your competitors' websites or any small portable sanitation company website for ideas.

If you feel comfortable with your computer skills, you can go to a build-it-yourself site such as Squarespace, Weebly or Wix. Otherwise, ask your Chamber of Commerce for local web designers.

Before you can start building your home on the web, you'll need a web address for it, which is called a domain name. For example, ours is www.johntalk.com. If your company name is Sam's Superior Sanitation, its address might be www.samssuperiorsanitation.com.

Your designer or the build-it-yourself site you work with can help you register your domain name, or you can register it yourself on websites like GoDaddy.com. Site registration usually costs less than \$50 a year.

You'll also want to be able to make changes to your website as your business grows. Keep your site fresh. Ask your website designer to show you how to make minor changes, or else you will probably be charged whenever a change is needed.

Finally, your website should include a "call to action." This is a simple request to get your customer to act, such as "Call us today!" or "Call us first!" or "Contact us for more information on how we can serve you."

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