

MARKETING STRATEGY

FOR INTERIOR DESIGNERS, ARCHITECTS & BUILDERS

There is a lot of advice out there about marketing, but not a lot specifically for interior designers, architects, and builders. And especially not a lot of real knowledge about what works and what does not work for marketing.

Before you get started, there are three steps you need to do. First, figure out the kind of client you actually want to get. Second, figure out the very specific offer those clients will really want most. And third, choose the right marketing tools to reach those clients. Below is more information about those strategies in more detail.

STEP 1 | IDENTIFY YOUR IDEAL CLIENT TYPE

If there is only one marketing strategy we can recommend to you, it is to discover exactly who your “ideal client” is. The ideal client type will determine which marketing you use, what services you offer, and how you stand apart. The more you think about exactly who your ideal client is, the better your marketing will be. For instance, let’s say you’re an interior designer in Austin, TX. After doing work for about 20 clients in the last 3 years, you discover that your favorite clients are always Accountants who live in the suburbs surrounding Austin, and not in the middle of the city. You also find that there are 3 neighborhoods where all your best clients live.

STEP 2 | IDENTIFY YOUR MOST IN-DEMAND SERVICE

Then, get really specific about what service you want to marketing to your ideal clients. Many firms aren’t specific enough about this. The more specific, the more you’ll attract them. For instance, at JPW Design Studio we don’t just do website design for anyone. We design fully custom websites exclusively for interior designers, architects, and builders in the United States. You should do something similar such as “Custom modern home construction for North Texas” or “Full Home Custom Interior for Southern California.” That specificity will make a big difference in your marketing.

STEP 3 | CHOOSE THE RIGHT MARKETING TOOLS

Once you figure the first two steps out, then you need to figure out which marketing tools will work best for you. Since most of our clients specialize in interior design, architecture, or construction, for the most part you're going after high-income clientele who prefer certain methods of communication, which I'll detail below.

BEST | GOOGLE BUSINESS

An easy place to start is to set up a Google Business listing if you do not have one. It is free and will help you get found when someone does a local search and especially a Map search. You want to make sure you tie your business to keywords such as "interior designer," "architect," or "builder" so people find you. It only takes a couple hours to get this set up and can have lasting impact. It also helps to get clients to give you a Google Review once your listing is live. As an example, if you go to www.google.com and search for JPW Design Studio, you can see how it looks for our own firm and the reviews our clients have left us. This is one simple touch point. You can also do it on Yelp or Houzz, but Google typically gets the most visibility.

SIGN UP FOR A GOOGLE BUSINESS ACCOUNT AT WWW.GOOGLE.COM/BUSINESS

BEST | EMAIL MARKETING

Most design firms do not try Email Marketing and they especially do not stick with it. This is mostly because people feel like they are "bugging" others by doing Email Marketing. What I've found is that committing to even just 1 email per month is going to help you keep in touch with new leads, existing clients and referrals very easily. For Email Marketing, we recommend using Squarespace Email Marketing because it is very simple to use and works perfectly for interior designers, architects & builders. In fact, if you're a client of JPW Design Studio, we can send you training videos on how to use Squarespace Email Marketing with training videos and tutorials so you can easily send your own emails once per month.

What we have found after doing numerous tests is that the 2 most important topics to cover are: 1) Examples of projects and design work you have completed, even if it is just one really nice photo, and then tell a short story about that project, and 2) Educational information around your industry. For instance, explaining your design process, budgeting, what to expect, how furniture purchasing

works, the different complications that can arise during the project, and so on. With just these two topics you will get a lot of attention and traffic to your website from your Email Marketing.

THE BEST EMAIL MARKETING TOOL RIGHT NOW IS WWW.MAILCHIMP.COM

BEST | DIRECT MAIL MARKETING

Even though so much of marketing has gone online, there is a huge opportunity to stand out with Print Marketing. While you can get fancy with a magazine, catalog, or brochure, often times it is more successful to simply send a hand-written note, which is more likely to get opened and read, and keeping it short but focusing on driving people to view your website portfolio or website contact page to schedule a consultation with you.

BEST | TEXT MESSAGES & PHONE CALLS

Many firms don't think of this as marketing, but by expanding your methods of communication in the Marketing phase of your business will increase conversions. Some people prefer email, others prefer text or getting on the phone. Some prefer getting something in the mail. Using a variety of communication tools will increase the likelihood of reaching new clients, especially if they miss your call or text, an email goes to Spam, or mail does not get delivered. Change up your methods of communication to ensure new clients are reached and communicated with.

AVERAGE | PUBLIC RELATIONS & MEDIA

Of all marketing options, Public Relations is usually the biggest investment and is only recommended if you are ready to scale up your firm once you have your ideal client type and other marketing in place. You can do local or national public relations and get featured in larger magazines such as Elle Decor, Architectural Digest or smaller, local magazines and blogs that are target to your ideal client type or the areas you serve. You'll get better results by being featured in or doing Ads in magazines that your ideal clients actually read. For instance, if your ideal client is a Doctor in San Francisco, it would be best to do an Ad in a Doctor Magazine in San Francisco than to get featured in Elle Decor, which Doctors are most likely not looking at. If you're interested in learning more, we can refer you to a recommended Public Relations firm that works directly with interior designers, architects, and builders.

AVERAGE | GOOGLE ADS

Similar to SEO and Google Business, paying for Google Ads is a way to jump start marketing and get found by people looking for your services and in your area. The downside to this is that it is very complex to set up. Normally, it only costs \$100 to \$200 per month for Ads, but the set-up cost and management by a third-party company is what is most complicated, or learning how to do it on your own can be a large learning curve. Contact us for referrals on companies that do Google Ads or more information on how to do it yourself, if you're interested in learning.

SIGN UP FOR GOOGLE ADS AT WWW.GOOGLE.COM/ADS

AVERAGE | SOCIAL MEDIA

We recommend only doing social media marketing if you enjoy posting on a daily basis and connecting with your existing clients and their referrals. Social Media is most ideal for referral marketing because it is very hard to stand out to brand new clients on the platform, especially when only 2% of your posts are actually shown to your followers. Both Facebook & Instagram intentionally hide posts to 98% of your followers because they prioritize Ads and other curated content, so it makes for a very unreliable marketing tool unless you are willing to pay for Ads every single day. However, we can refer you to a recommended social media marketing company that works exclusively with interior designers, architects, and builders.

WORST | HOUZZ & OTHER SEARCH INDEXES

Anything that has a "search" bar and shows you lots and lots of results for similar services is going to make it hard to compete. For instance, if you go to Google and search for "interior designers" you'll get hundreds of results. The same goes for platforms like Houzz. This is why it is important to not rely on search engines exclusively for marketing, such as SEO or social media. You want to stand out in areas outside of search engines. It's still good to set up a profile and get reviews, but more people will see Google reviews than Houzz reviews.

SIGN UP FOR HOUZZ AT HOUZZ.COM

WORST | BLOGGING

From what we've seen with other interior designers, it's really only worth blogging on a weekly basis if you enjoy it or have someone else on your team who enjoys blogging. If you don't enjoy writing regularly, there is no value in having a blog. Only 5% of your website visitors will ever view your blog. So only start when you feel ready to blog on a weekly basis for any marketing or SEO purposes - otherwise, that time and energy would be better spent on marketing to existing leads, getting referrals from previous clients, or getting repeat business from current clients. A better option is to do a monthly Email Marketing plan and use your email marketing posts also as your blog posts, so at least you're taking care of 2 marketing tools with less effort.