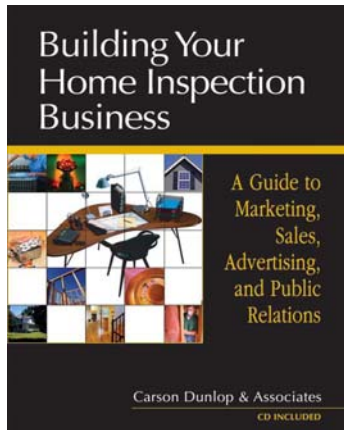


Book Reviews by Dave Bottoms

The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them. – Mark Twain



Title:	Building Your Home Inspection Business - A Guide to Marketing, Sales, Advertising, and Public Relations
Author:	Carson Dunlop & Associates
Publisher:	Dearborn Home Inspection Education
Publication Date:	2005
Number of Pages:	292
ISBN:	0793195691
Cover Price:	\$199. CDN

I remember attending a meeting for home inspectors a couple of years back when, during the break, an elderly gentleman who had taken up home inspection as something to do in his retirement approached me wanting to share his ideas on marketing and advertising. He had “created” a homemade brochure on his computer, which looked like nothing more than a shopping list his wife might have handed him that morning as he left his house. But boy was he proud – apparently, his cost was in the ballpark of \$0.30 a brochure. In his opinion, his frugality was something others could and should learn from and he was bound on teaching this valuable marketing lesson to anyone who’d listen. The lesson I learned was that just because you have the equipment (computer, desktop-publishing software, and printer) to create your own business cards and brochures doesn’t mean you should. There are professionals in that field who earn a living designing top-notch marketing materials. Hiring one to create the right professional image for your company is money well spent. Bottom line, a poorly crafted and badly written brochure won’t be worth the thirty-cent scrap of paper on which it’s printed if it leaves potential clients with the impression you are a small-time amateur.

None the less, small business entrepreneurs tend to be hands-on type people. In many cases, they have to be. When starting out, money is often tight and sometimes there is little choice but to do things yourself. You read up as best you can on what you need to know, perusing web sites, buying books, visiting the library, and so on. The problem is finding the right resources, ones that are specifically geared to the business you are running and the product or service you are selling. A book on the branding and marketing strategies of Coca-Cola or McDonald’s is going to be of little value to a one-person home inspection firm trying to figure out how to grow his/her fledgling business. Sure, there are plenty of home inspection how-to books on the market, but few of them delve into the business side of the home inspection business.

That’s where Carson Dunlop’s new book *Building Your Home Inspection Business* steps in to fill the void.

Building Your Home Inspection Business offers a wealth of information covering almost every aspect of marketing your home inspection business. Not only does this book provide countless ideas, tips and strategies for growing your business, it also delves into the psychology behind effective marketing, sales, advertising, and customer service. What makes this book especially valuable for any home inspector’s library is that it deals directly with the business of home inspection. In other words, it’s not written in broad, watered-down generalities meant to appeal to a wide audience. This book is written for you, whether you are a new home inspector just entering the market or an experienced inspector looking for ways to grow your existing enterprise.

BYHIB is laid out in two parts, *Marketing Concepts and Practice, and Advertising, Public Relations, and Sales*. Each part is broken down into multiple study sessions, with learning objectives, keywords, and quick quizzes. The book suggests that each session should take thirty to ninety minutes to complete. There are also assignments to help you turn your knowledge into practice. By the time you’re finished this book, you should have a much better understanding of the basic marketing and business concepts key to running a successful home inspection business. The book also comes with a CD-Rom package containing marketing, sales, advertising, and public relations templates that you can use to create your own materials.

To give you an idea of what to expect, here is a list of study session headings: Basic Marketing Concepts, Developing Your Company Identity and Market Focus, Service Philosophy, Pricing Your Services, Marketing for Growth, Referral Network, Writing Your Market Plan, Handling Complaints, Market Directions, Advertising Through Marketing Materials, Advertising Strategies and Methods, People-Driven Public Relations, Media-Driven Public Relations, Event-Driven Public Relations, Fundamentals of Sales and Selling, Targeting Your Sales Efforts, Moving from Objections to Closing, and Managing Customers and Building Relationships.

To get a better idea of what to expect, you can view the first study session Basic Marketing Concepts online at:
<http://www.carsondunlop.com/Inspectors/buildbusiness.htm>

BYHIB is not as much a book as it is a tool, designed for new and seasoned inspectors alike. If you are serious about your business and have a desire to grow your company, then this book is for you. To quote from the introduction: *This book is designed to give you the benefit of our extensive experience in marketing a home inspection company. Not only will we share our own secrets, but we also will share what we’ve learned by working with many other home inspection companies. We will provide you with the knowledge and tools to help you grow your business quickly, while you invest a minimum of time and money.*

Building Your Home Inspection Business is now available in Canada through Carson Dunlop & Associates. For more information, visit Carson Dunlop online at www.carsondunlop.com ■