

## **Marketing and Sales Above All Else**

By Isaac Peck, Publisher

Mark Cuban, entrepreneur, investor and owner of the Dallas Mavericks, is fond of saying: “Sales cures all.”

While many home inspectors approach the inspection profession with a focus on the technical side and are quick to point out that one needs quality education, thorough training, an experienced mentor, and effective tools, the foundational nature of sales and marketing for a home inspection business is a reality that inspectors know all too well.

*Working RE's* research reveals that over 10,000 would-be home inspectors purchase pre-licensing education or training, either live or in-person, every single year. The promise of being one's own boss, making over six figures (the training companies say!), and building a business is attractive to many. From those 10,000 souls, roughly 50% actually complete the training, and a fraction of those graduating students actually “make a go of it” and become a practicing home inspector.

While exact numbers about those newly minted home inspectors are hard to come by, an estimated 60 percent of inspectors fail in their first year, and a rumored 90 percent fail in their first 5 years.

Talk about a culling of the herd!

And what is the biggest reason home inspectors throw in the towel?

You guessed it. Not enough marketing. Not enough sales. (In that order, too.)

So what exactly does it take for a home inspector to market their business and sell their services effectively?

### **Home Inspector Versus Marketer**

Are you in the marketing business or the home inspection business? The answer is both, right?

Mike Crow, founder of Coach Blueprint and the “Father of Home Inspector Marketing,” says that the average home inspector doesn't realize he or she isn't in the home inspection business, they are in the “marketing of a home inspection” business.

“Most home inspectors think they're in a technical business. They're not. They are in a marketing business. That is true of all businesses, but it is especially true of a home inspection business. Providing a good, solid home inspection is absolutely necessary—but it is the baseline. To be successful as a home inspector long-term, whether you want to be a solopreneur or you want to build a multi-inspector firm, you have to understand how important marketing is. Many truly great and knowledgeable inspectors don't have enough business or simply go out of business because they don't take the time to learn about marketing and sales,” Crow says.

While the real estate market has slowed down considerably, Crow reports that his firm is actually up 10 percent year-over-year (YoY) compared to last year. “Most inspection firms are experiencing a drop in revenue right now, but the ones who are really focused on marketing are not. I just got finished last week with my Inspector Marketing Mastermind Meeting. Our guys are blowing it out of the water. They are up 30, 40, and 50 percent over last year!,” Crow reports.

Business First  
In his interview

### **Marketing Stackables**

Crow has helped build and sell several multi-million dollar revenue home inspection firms and has also personally coached over 100 home inspection businesses over the \$1,000,000 revenue per year mark.

The advice that Crow shares with his mastermind members and teaches at his conferences is too vast to be summarized in this article, but Crow offers several practical steps home inspectors can take to improve their marketing efforts. Crow calls these actions “**stackables**”—specific tactics and strategies that should be deployed together and that work together to create a powerful marketing plan. Crow’s blueprint for inspector marketing stackables includes:

**1. Visiting Agent/Broker Offices:** Building relationships with real estate agents is a strategy that has been deployed by inspectors for decades, but Crow offers several key techniques that inspectors frequently overlook.

The first is consistency. The number one problem many inspectors have is lack of consistency, according to Crow. “Most inspectors visit an office only two or three times. Or only once every month or two. They don’t get enough results, so they stop doing it. Or they get busy, so they stop it. It creates a rollercoaster business where sometimes they’re getting work and other times it’s slow. Our rule of thumb is: for every home inspector in your firm, you need to visit 10 Broker offices consistently, every single week,” says Crow.

Secondly, home inspectors need a reason to stop by. Crow recommends having a chocolate, cookie, or candy bowl that you can keep full in a Broker’s offer. “You need a reason to go in and out every week. It could be cookies, popcorn, or chocolate, it has to be something *good* that people enjoy. That’s the difference between the 95 percent or regular inspectors and the 5 percent of inspectors who really succeed,” Crow reports.

Home inspectors have to bring something from the “smile file,” as Crow warmly calls it. “I want to walk in the office and have the staff go ‘Oh man, is that the smile file? I want one of those.’ You want to bring something through the door every week that makes them happy to see you, not just tolerate you,” Crow explains.

**2. Have a Backup Call Center:** Answering the phone is one of the most important first impressions you can make on a potential client. If you don’t answer the phone the first time, many real estate agents and clients alike will turn around and call another home inspector immediately. “You are losing business if you don’t have someone to answer the phone at all times during business hours. If you want to grow, you need to make sure you **always answer the phone (AATP)**, so sign up to a backup call center that can help you handle calls while you are busy inspecting or on the phone with another client,” says Crow.

**3. Make Sure You Have an Avenue to Schedule Online:** Making it easy to schedule an inspection doesn’t just mean answering the phone. Real estate agents and potential customers must have some avenue to schedule an inspection online. “People want a seamless experience. Some might not even want to call. My website says Schedule Now and it really means Schedule Now—not ‘fill this out and we’ll call you back,’” advises Crow.

**4. Professional Brochures and Business Cards:** Having professionally designed brochures and business cards is an absolute must, but the message is also just as important. “Many home inspectors make the marketing all about themselves and about their home inspection—to their detriment. A good brochure should explain what these folks get. What is the benefit to them? Most inspectors over concentrate on the homebuyer. Yes, we want to make sure the homebuyer gets a solid inspection. But we want to think bigger. We want to make sure EVERYBODY involved in the real estate transaction gets what they need. Whether it is the mortgage company, the real estate company, or the insurance company. Many home inspectors say ‘my job ends right here at the homebuyer.’ We build in little pieces to make sure everyone gets their needs met,” Crow says.

**5. Have a Unique Selling Proposition (USP):** Crow distinguishes a USP from the other types of selling propositions home inspectors typically use—GSPs, RSPs, and PSPs—it has to be something that clearly sets you apart from your competitors. A GSP is a Generic Selling Point like “we have easy-to-read reports” or “we provide excellent service.” A RSP is a Required Selling Point that every home inspector arguably should offer like “I am licensed” and “we protect our clients with E&O insurance” A PSP is a

Personal Selling Point like “I’ve been in construction for 20 years and have 10 years experience as a home inspector.” In Mike Crow’s case, he has personally performed over 10,000 inspections and also held a seat on the Texas Real Estate Commission Inspector Advisory Board, so he has a very strong PSP. However, the problem with PSPs is that they are inspector-specific, so if you are trying to build a multi-inspector firm where you don’t personally have to do every home inspection, the PSP loses much of its power.

A USP, on the other hand, is something unique—by definition—and sets a home inspector apart from his local (or national) peers. Some examples Crow offers include printing and emailing reports on-site, including a free 90-Day Warranty, and a 200% Satisfaction Guarantee where if the client is not satisfied, Crow refunds the inspection fee and then pays for another licensed home inspector to inspect the home. Carrying E&O insurance that covers referral partners can also be a way to create a USP with respect to Realtors.

Home inspectors who want to learn more about Mike Crow’s marketing strategies and coaching, as well as an upcoming National Conference Crow will be hosting in February 2024, can visit [MikeCrowReturns.com](http://MikeCrowReturns.com)