AFSA45
SMALL BUSINESS, BIG IMPACT: MARKETING BASICS THAT WORK
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AFSA
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Lainey Liotta is the Global Fire Protection Segment Sr. Manager for Lubrizol where she is responsible for setting the business strategy for BlazeMaster® Fire Protection Systems and UL-listed freezemaster™ Antifreeze. A Penn State graduate with two degrees in Marketing and Spanish, Lainey spent five years in product management at Johnson Controls/Tyco and two years in business development at Chemours before joining Lubrizol in 2019. Lainey is passionate about advancing the fire sprinkler industry and promoting the wonderful opportunities within it. She participates on many AFSA councils and committees and is a Board Member of the NFSA, IFSA, and The SFPE Foundation.
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Why We're Here
Marketing is not "fluff."
It is way more than ads and social media
It is how good companies become easier to find and easier to choose.
It is how good companies attract and retain top talent.
Goal: Leave with practical steps you can implement into your business immediately.
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Agenda
What is Marketing?
What is your messaging to your ideal customer?
Website tips
Online presence basics
Recruiting
Q&A
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WHAT IS MARKETING?
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What is Marketing?

- Marketing is simply helping people understand **why they should choose you**.
- Helps customers answer:
  - Who are you?
  - What do you do?
  - Where is your service area?
  - Are you credible?
  - Why should you be trusted?
  - How can you be contacted?

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The Basic Formula

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The Basic Formula

- Be clear about **who you serve and what you do**
- Make your business **easy to find**
- Show **proof** that you do good work
- **Stay visible** in your local market(s)
- Ask for **reviews and referrals**, especially if you're just starting out
  - Don't forget… referrals can not only come from customers, but also from distributors, manufacturers, tech schools

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Build a Simple Customer Profile

- Ask yourself "Who do I want more of?"
  - Which customers are most profitable?
  - Which customers are easiest to work with?
  - Which work do we want more of?
  - Which work do we want less of?
  - Who values the same things we do?
  - Who has a similar growth strategy to us?
- If you speak to everyone, you sound useful to no one

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Build a Simple Customer Profile

- For your ideal customer, write down:
  - What type of work do they need?
  - What problems cost them time or money?
  - What do they worry about?
  - What makes them trust a contractor?
  - Where do they look for information?
- For example, contractor who wants more inspection work should market differently than one trying to win new construction bids.

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Customer Examples

Customers (Who)	Your Services (What)
General contractors	New construction installation
Building owners	ITM / service
Facility / property managers	Retrofit
Designers	Design
Engineers	Code consultation
Architects	Training/education
Builders	Accredations
AHJs	

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Customer Examples… A Level Deeper

Customers (Who)
- Multifamily builders
- Big-box retail stores
- Cold storage facility designers
- AHJs in Northeast Ohio

Your Services (What)
- New construction installation
- ITM / service
- Retrofit
- Design
- Code consultation
- Training/education
- Accreditations

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Your Message in One Sentence

- **Formula:**
  - We help [customer] with [service] so they can [benefit.]
- **Examples:**
  - We help general contractors complete code-compliant fire sprinkler projects within budget and on schedule.
  - We help warehouse and cold storage facility owners nationwide keep fire protection systems inspected, maintained, and ready.
  - We help residential property managers across the southeast reduce fire sprinkler system headaches with reliable service, clear communication, and transparent pricing.
  - We help builders navigate fire sprinkler system requirements early so projects move smoothly.
  - We design, install, inspect, and maintain fire protection systems for residential and commercial buildings across Central Texas.

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What Makes You Different?

Your differentiator might be…
- Responsiveness
- 24/7 hotline
- Range of services (one-stop-shop)
- Geographic service area
- Years of experience
- Local/family ownership
- Warranty
- Clean, professional jobsites
- Code knowledge
- Certifications
- Training program
- Strong safety culture
- Hiring protocols
- Community service & involvement

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WEBSITE TIPS

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Your Website Should…

Answer these questions clearly and concisely:
- What do you do?
- What geographies do you work?
- Who do you serve?
- **Why should someone trust you over another company?**
- How do I contact you?

Build Credibility.

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You're looking to buy a used car for your teenager….

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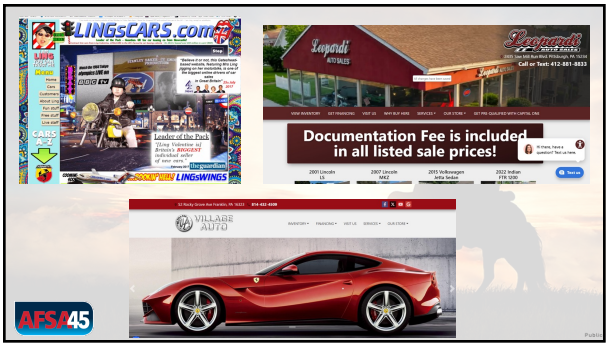

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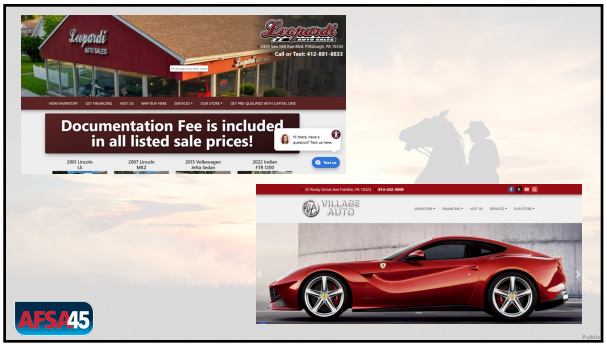

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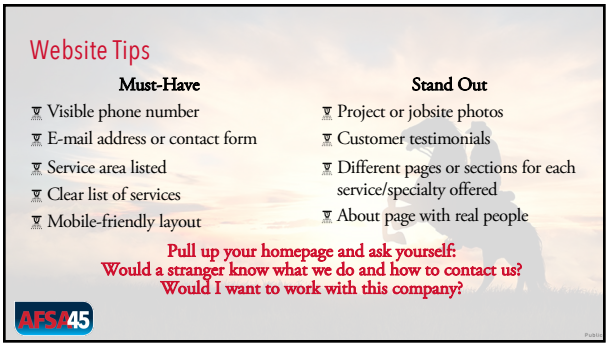

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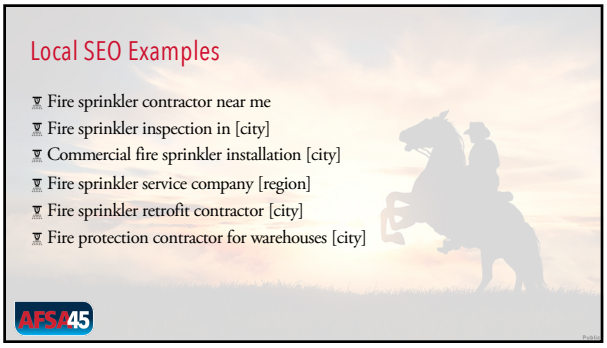

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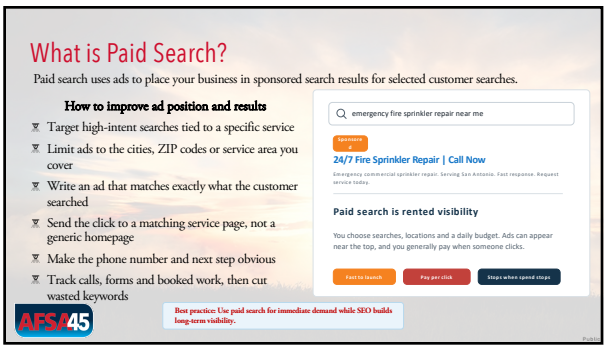

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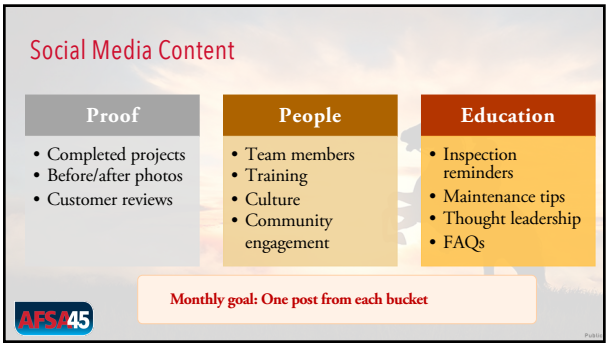

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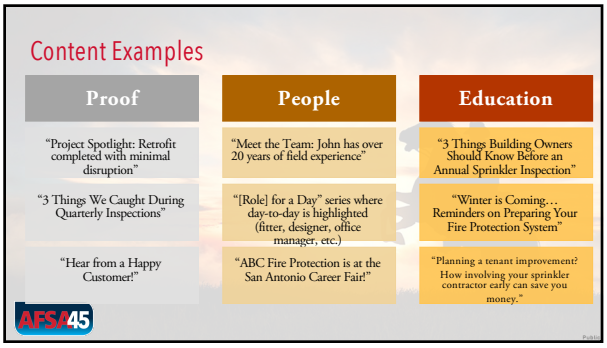

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Common Mistakes to Avoid
01
Trying to be on every social media platform
02
Using only stock photos or AI photos
03
Posting once, then disappearing
04
Using too much jargon
05
Not tracking performance
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DISCUSSION:
Recruiting & Retention
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The Basic Formula
KNOW WHO YOU WANT MORE OF
GET FOUND LOCALLY
BUILD TRUST
STAY VISIBLE
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Questions?
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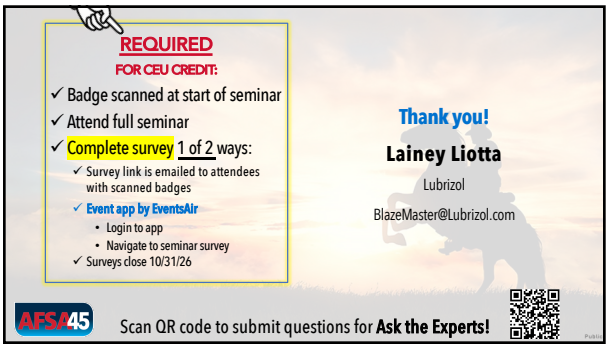
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✓ Surveys close 10/31/26
Thank you!
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Scan QR code to submit questions for Ask the Experts!

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2027 Training Schedule

WEBINARS

1/6	Updates to NFPA 20
1/20	Calculating Pressure Reducing Hose Valves
2/3	Consumer Alert: Nitrogen in Sprinkler Systems
2/17	Reviewing Hydraulic Calculations
3/3	Updates to NFPA 13, 2028 Ed.
3/17	Updates to NFPA 13R & 13D, 2028 Eds.
4/7	Topic Coming Soon
4/21	NFPA 25: Roles & Responsibilities
5/5	Standpipe Flow Test Procedures
5/19	Storage 101
6/2	NFPA Technical Meeting - Voting Guide
6/16	Topic Coming Soon
6/30	Topic Coming Soon
7/7	Updates to NFPA 14, 2027 Edition
7/21	Adjacent Hazards & Design Methods
8/4	Acceptance Testing
8/18	Modifications to Existing Systems
9/22	Topic Coming Soon
10/6	Seismic 101
10/20	Proposed Updates to NFPA 25, 2029 Ed.
11/3	Evaluating Fire Pump Flow Tests
11/17	Top 10 Tech Reviews
12/1	Designing Water Storage Tanks
12/15	Pump Room Layout

PROGRAMS

Feb 9 - Mar 5 Apr 20 - May 14 Aug 3 - Aug 27** Oct 26 - Nov 19	Beginning Design School*
Apr 26 - May 7 Nov 1 - 12	Intermediate Design School*
Feb 8 - 10** Apr 12 - 14 Jul 12 - 14 Oct 11 - 13	Sprinkler Hydraulics Calculations Workshop
Apr 19 - 21 Oct 18 - 20	Advanced Hydraulics Calculations Workshop
Feb 11** Apr 30 Jul 23 Sep 24	Introduction to the Fire Sprinkler Industry
Mar 1 - 3 May 17 - 19 Aug 16 - 18 Oct 18 - 20**	NFPA 25 Essentials Workshop
Jun 7 - 10 Sep 20 - 23	Experienced Inspector Skills Lab
Mar 4 - 5 May 20 - 21 Aug 19 - 20 Oct 21 - 22**	NFPA 25 Fire Pump Workshop
Spring Summer Fall	ITM Inspector Development Program* *This program is 20 months.*

** Hybrid course **At General Air Products Lab, Exton, PA*

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September 8-11	Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego, CA

For More Details Visit:
firesprinkler.org

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Dates subject to change. Programs subject to minimum registrations.

rev 9/14/2026

Virtual Instruction Path (VIP)

for Sprinkler Fitting Apprentices

Level 1 - Begins January 2027

Level 2 - Begins February 2027

Level 3 - Begins January 2027

Level 4 - Begins March 2027

www.firesprinkler.org/VIP

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HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS FOR 2027

FEATURING AFSA'S TRAINING LAB

NFPA 25 Essentials Workshop

Mar | May | Aug | Oct

Description: Understand roles, responsibilities, and NFPA 25 ITM procedures through hands-on testing of wet systems, dry systems, and fire pumps.

NFPA 25 Fire Pump Workshop

Mar | May | Aug | Oct

Description: Develop practical NFPA 25 fire pump ITM skills, including no-flow and full-flow testing, water supply graphing, and performance evaluation.

Introduction to the Fire Sprinkler Industry

Feb | Apr | Jul | Sep

Description: This course is designed for those new to the industry. An introductory, wide-ranging 8-hour course that provides a broad overview of core fire sprinkler industry concepts for those new to the field.

Experienced Inspector Skills Lab NEW

Mar | Sep

Description: Take your ITM expertise beyond the basics. Designed for experienced technicians, this course combines focused classroom instruction with hands-on system lab training to strengthen your application of current NFPA 25 inspection, testing, and maintenance requirements. Refine fire sprinkler testing practices, improve documentation, deliver more consistent service, and help reduce liability while reinforcing knowledge commonly covered on certification exams.

Learn more about AFSA's fire sprinkler lab featuring functional risers, a spray room, fire pumps, and an interactive classroom.

firesprinkler.org/lab