



Elmhurst's
guide to...

How to market your business

2

AUGUST 21





Introduction

Now you've set up your business, you may be in a position to start winning work and promoting/selling your energy assessment services.

The way you market your business will be critical in determining its success, and could ensure that customers choose you over your competitors. There is "no one size fits all" approach to this, as every business is different, which is why if you search online you will find a lot of information about this very topic.

Elmhurst has created this particular guide to give you an idea of what you could do for your own business. Many of the areas highlighted within this guide have already been tried and tested by Energy Assessors.



Your Brand

What exactly is a Brand?
Some believe it is how your business is perceived by customers, others see it as a way to help people identify your business. In truth, both are right.

However, to keep things simple when looking at your own brand, you should just consider and document your Brand Identity and Image.

Brand Identity - who you really are?

Your Brand Identity is all the stuff that your customers can see when viewing your brand:

- Your logo
- Your strapline
- The language you use in your communication and content
- The colours
- The imagery
- Your personality

It's everything that customers can use to identify your business.

Brand Logo

A good place to start with Brand Identity is with your logo, which can be used across your emails, websites, and any other relevant paperwork. You can design a logo yourself, however, it is worth considering a designer who will more often than not have a good eye for what you need and can also help you with some of the other elements shown within your Brand Identity.

Brand personality

It is worth listing a few human characteristics (such as fun, quirky, professional, dynamic) which represent your brand personality. These words should be seen as your 'north star' whenever you communicate or create content for your business.

Brand image - How you want to be perceived?

Your Brand Image is the perception of your brand by your customers. It is how you are actually seen. Your Brand Identity can have a strong influence over your overall image, but is also based on how you interact, promote and position yourself in the market.

This is very similar to us as people. For example someone might dress very smart to give the image of professionalism and quality, however, if they are quite blunt when they communicate, this could give the impression that they are rude and not particularly friendly.

It is worth having an idea of how you would like your business to be perceived and you can measure if you have been successful by looking at your own reviews and by sending surveys to your customers.

Competitor Analysis

When making key decisions regarding your business, it's always a good idea to see what your competitors are doing.

First you need to find out who your competitors are, both locally and nationally, so that you can monitor what they're doing and see what's working for them. For example, if your competitors' prices are much higher than yours, it could be an indicator that you're undervaluing your work and you need to charge higher prices, and vice versa.

You could also get an idea of what services your competitors are offering. For example, some assessors may also offer legionella risk assessments alongside their energy assessments. This is a value adding activity and if other assessors are doing it and you're not, it can put you at a disadvantage.

Another thing to look at is how your competitors are promoting themselves to see what's effective and what isn't. Are they posting adverts in local newspapers? Are they attending networking events? Are they particularly active on social media? etc.

Consider your Unique Selling Point (USP)

A USP is a feature/characteristic that your business has that distinguishes you from the competition.

There are plenty of competitors out there who will be vying for your customer's attention, and with this in mind you will need to find ways to stand out from the crowd and offer something of value to your potential customers so that they will choose you.

There are many different USPs that you/your business could have, for example:

- ✓ Are you local?
- ✓ Are you fast at carrying out assessments?
- ✓ Do you specialise in a specific type of property, eg. Period properties
- ✓ Do you pride yourself on your accuracy and reliability
- ✓ Do you offer more expertise?





Marketing Channels

There are many different marketing channels that Energy Assessors can use to promote their businesses. It is always worth reviewing the cost and different channels available to you as it's not viable for someone to utilise every channel listed below. However, it is worth selecting a few channels which align with you and your business.

- Social Media
- Website
- Google (Pay-per-click)
- Email
- Directories
- Networking
- Print Media
- Direct mail
- Radio (local)



Social Media

Having a social media account is a great way to build relationships and interact with potential customers, and expand your reach in the energy efficiency industry. Your business can use social media to comment on industry news, and explore the opinions of other industry professionals.



LinkedIn

Best for making connections and networking with other professionals in the industry, keeping up to date with industry news, and sharing your opinion on changes in the buildings and energy efficiency industry.

More information:

<https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/linkedin-pages>



Facebook

Best for getting your business name out there in your local area. It could be a good idea to invite local estate agents and other potential clients to 'like' your page, where you can sell yourself and your services.

More information:

<https://www.facebook.com/business>



Website

Setting up a website is now considered an important part of having a business, as many consumers like to conduct some research into the company they're buying from to ensure that it's legitimate.

If you are looking at setting up a website for your business, you should take a look at the following steps first, to get an idea of what's involved.



Step 1a Register your website domain name

Your domain name is the name of your website i.e. www.elmhurstenergy.co.uk

It doesn't have to be your company name but it needs to be relevant, easy on the eye and simple to remember. You will be charged a small fee each year in order to keep possession of your domain. You can register your domain on a number of websites, some of which have been listed below:

Google Domains: https://domains.google/intl/en_uk

123-Reg: <https://www.123-reg.co.uk/domain-names>

Go Daddy: <https://uk.godaddy.com/domains>

Wix: <https://www.wix.com/domain/buy-domain-name>

Step 1b Hosting

A website needs to be hosted on a web server in order to make it accessible to users via the internet.

It is likely that the provider you are purchasing your domain name from will also offer hosting services (either included or separate). There are plenty of companies that provide free hosting space - BT and Google are just two. However, free services may have limited facilities.



Step 2 Building a website

When it comes to designing and building your website, you basically have three options. Either you can do it yourself from scratch (not recommended unless you are very techy), you can purchase a DIY template builder, or you can get someone else to do it for you.

There are a number of DIY template builders out there (some are even free), but it all depends on what you want from your website and how much you are wanting to spend. Some DIY template builders are listed below:

Go Daddy: <https://uk.godaddy.com/websites/website-builder>

Wix: <https://www.wix.com/>

Wordpress: <https://wordpress.com/>

Squarespace: <https://www.squarespace.com/>



What should be on my website?

Some key information that you may want to include on your website:

- ✓ **Homepage**
- ✓ **About you/ your company**
- ✓ **Reviews**
- ✓ **What services you offer**
- ✓ **Contact details**
- ✓ **Call to action** - This is what you want people to do once they arrive on your website. For example, if you want your potential customers to call you to get a quote for an EPC, add a call to action button on your site, saying 'Call now'. Once people press the button it will automatically call your listed number. If you don't think that you'll be able to answer calls throughout the day, you could request that customers complete an email form instead.

If you're struggling with knowing how much detail to go into, you could peruse the websites of other energy assessment companies' to see what information they have provided. This will help give you more of an idea what to include on your website.



Google Pay-per-click

Another method of marketing your services is to advertise on Google.

Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising allows you to promote your services, by creating ads detailing what your business does and what services you offer. PPC can act as a useful tool for new businesses because it can allow you to appear at the top of Google when someone searches relevant terms to your business, such as 'EPC in Birmingham', etc.

To ensure you're not spending lots of money on this, and are receiving relevant enquiries, you can set it to only target areas you currently operate in. The advert that will show up to searchers will link them through to your website once they click on it.

More information available here:
https://ads.google.com/intl/en_uk/home/



Email

Using a professional email marketing software will help you to make your emails to clients appear more polished. There are a few free pieces of software that you can use, such as MailChimp, which allows you to upload graphics and give some structure to your emails.

If you wanted to keep things simple, you could use this kind of specialised software to send introductory emails to prospective clients offering your services, and use another email provider, eg. Outlook, Gmail, etc. for your regular correspondence.



Directories

Adding your business to free directory listings is a way to ensure that potential customers can actually find your business. Some directories that we recommend are Yelp and Google My Business.

What information should I include?

When listing your business on an online directory, you should include: your business name, your website, an email address and phone number, a description of what your business does, and what products/services you provide.

Another way to gain more visibility is to complete your details on Access Elmhurst; specifically your postcode coverage. This will ensure that you can be found by potential customers on Elmhurst's online 'Search for Assessor' facility. More information about how to do this is available within the 'My Documents' area of Access Elmhurst.



Networking

One of the first things you should consider doing after training and accrediting with Elmhurst is introducing yourself to estate/lettings agents, councils and businesses in your local area. This will ensure that they will have your details on hand whenever one of their properties needs to have an energy assessment.

Another method of getting your name out there is to attend local business and networking events. This will help you to build up your reputation within the local community and you can establish yourself as a friendly face.

You should also consider networking with other energy and housing professionals. This might sound unusual considering they could be in competition with you, but there may be opportunities to partner and work with them to win more business in future.



Other means of advertising

Some more traditional means of advertising that your business could utilise are:



Print media

This refers to advertising in paper publications, such as newspapers, magazines, and newsletters. You can advertise in local publications to help get your name out there.



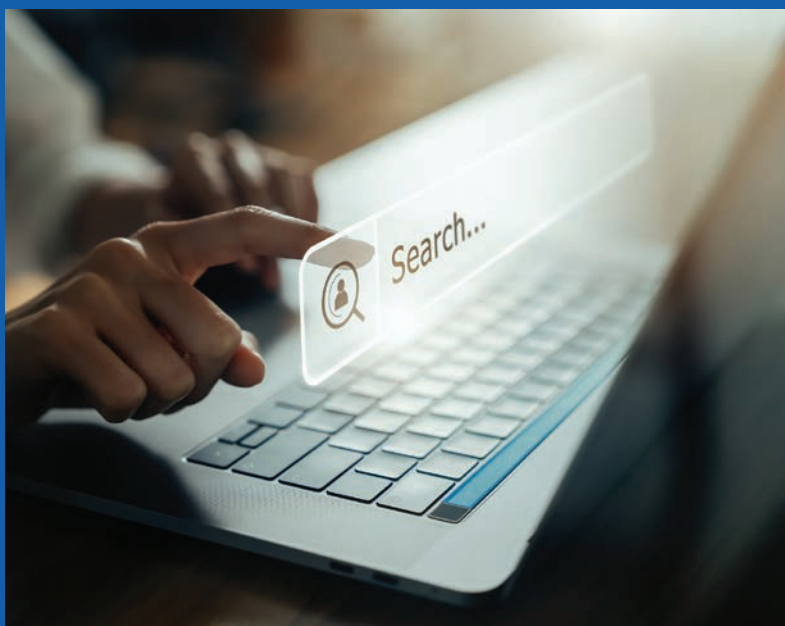
Direct Mail

This is when you send physical correspondence to potential customers in hope that they will contact you and use your services. An example of this can be something as simple as posting leaflets to potential customers.



Radio (local)

By creating a short radio advert selling your services and getting it played on local radio stations, you increase your chances of potential customers finding you.



Other areas to consider

Public Contracts

Another way for energy assessors to find work opportunities is through public contracts.

These are published by government and local authorities and can offer large scale work to those who provide EPCs and/or retrofit services. In order to locate contracts relevant to you, type in 'EPC' or related terms on the websites listed below.

Useful websites:

England:

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>

<https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Search>

The second link can be used to locate higher value contracts.

Wales:

<https://www.sell2wales.gov.wales>

Scotland:

<https://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk>

Click the 'search notices' tab.

Northern Ireland:

<https://e-sourcingni.bravosolution.co.uk/web/login.shtml>

Please note that registration is required for to view opportunities on this site.



Reviews

Once the process of lodging an EPC for a customer has been completed, you should contact them and ask if they would be willing to leave you a positive review.

There are a number of places online where you can encourage customers to leave you a review. This includes: Google reviews, TrustPilot, your website, and even on your Facebook page.

If you've been running your energy assessment business for a while and have an array of past customers, you could reach out to those that were happy with your service and ask if they would leave you a review.



For further information about the services
that **Elmhurst Energy** provides please visit:

www.elmhurstenergy.co.uk

or call:

01455 883 250