As an independent contractor, your business and your passion are inextricably linked. A successful business means a positive association with your services, money in the bank, and affirmation of your livelihood. At Home Improvement Leads, we know that starting and growing your business is only one of many challenges associated with the contracting profession. We've compiled a list of four of the major challenges faced by independent contractors in the early stages of their business and some suggestions to help overcome them.

**Funding your business**

The first hurdle for many independent contractors is often finding the funds to start and grow their business. There are a variety of ways to source money to support contractors in the early stages of self-employment, from bank loans and grants to crowdfunding and borrowing from family and friends. While the way in which you fund your business is up to you, we recommend taking the time at the beginning to break down your projected costs for both the office and field portions of your business. If you need advice or guidance, the Small Business Administration has tons of information to help you get started.

**Choosing a memorable brand**

Once you have secured funding for your contracting practice, you can begin to think about branding. A memorable brand is one that stands out for all the right reasons, so choosing a name, logo, and tagline that is easily recognizable and that sticks in the mind is essential if you want your business to succeed. Again, these kinds of branding decisions are yours to make, but we think that consistency is key. Once you’ve chosen a particular brand name and logo, use the same color scheme and font for all of your equipment, correspondence, and advertising.

**Spreading the word**
Advertising is one of the most important processes in an independent contractor’s business development, but it can be difficult to choose the best ways to communicate your services and price points from the wide variety of advertising options available. While print and television/radio advertisements will most likely form part of your marketing strategy, we feel that it is absolutely essential to have an online presence if you want your contracting business to grow and thrive. If you feel comfortable setting up and maintaining your own linked social media accounts (including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and a website), make sure to keep everything updated regularly with clear and concise information. If this feels like too much additional responsibility for your fledgling business, you can hire a social media expert to curate your online presence for you.

**Getting positive reviews**

For most contractors, a successful business relies heavily on the reviews of previous clients. As your experience widens and your job expands, you will most likely have plenty of positive references from a variety of home improvement projects. In the early days of your business, your performance reviews will largely come from other professionals in the community who can vouch for your work ethic and the quality of your craftsmanship, so networking is just as important as securing those first positive reviews. An excellent way to make yourself known in your community is by joining local groups and councils and by attending meetings with other professionals in your field. Continuing education is also a great way to keep your skills up to date and ensure that your clients are getting the best results with the newest techniques.

*Contractor Challenges and How to Overcome Them*
*Kaitlin Krull*

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