



**Tree Surgeon
and Forestry
Insurance Services**



Marketing Guide for Arborists & Foresters

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Marketing tips for new businesses

This guide is more a collection of tips which have been written by our managing director at the request of one of the colleges he lectures at. Often simple things can have a big impact. The difference between success and failure is in the detail.

Have a landline!

First you need to have both a normal landline and a mobile number. Having a landline makes you appear more established and professional. Have an answer phone or, even better, get a company who will answer it for you. This normally costs as little as £1 per message. You can then call people back at your convenience and that can make all the difference.

A landline number can make customers feel more secure, particularly the older generation. I am in my forties and we were brought up with:

'Don't ever buy a car from somebody who only has a mobile number'

If you are talking to your customers, then you want to sound professional. Mobiles often break up and lose signal. Where possible, always use a landline, particularly when you are making that important first call.

Answer calls

Always answer your telephone whenever possible. This sounds obvious, but believe me so many people don't. Regularly we struggle to get hold of customers, and eventually when we do speak to them, we ask *'why don't you answer your phone?'* The reply is always *'Well, I don't answer it if I don't know the number'*. **How can you expect to get new customers??**

Websites

Firstly, there is not much left to say about the power of the internet. A good sharp website with pictures and testimonials says it all. People like to buy from companies that look sharp and modern.

Email

Many customers will deal with you by email, and a golden rule is: have a short email address. The longer it is, the more prone it is to error. How often do we see:-

Kenttreeandgardenmaintenanceservices@gmail.com

There is a real chance of a spelling mistake and the email disappearing into cyber space. So the above business could possibly use:-

ktgserv@gmail.com or even better *Simon@ktgserv.co.uk*

Short, sharp and a lot less prone to error.

Even if you don't have a website it is worth investing in a domain. These are not expensive. What looks best:-

Simon@ktgserv.co.uk or *ktgserv@googlemail.com*

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Be in charge

Often we talk to Arborists who say they work as a cooperative or informal partnership. The words we often hear are *'None of us are in charge. We work together'*.

So the question is - who would the public rather buy from?

An arborist and his mate who look to the heavens when the customer asks who is in charge, or the dynamic businessman who takes control and assures the customer his team are competent, and speaks with an aura of authority.

'I will be there making sure everything is done correctly'

What a great sales line!

Recently I moved house. I got two removal quotations. One was from a bloke and his mate and it was an informal partnership. Very wishy washy, but cheap at £700

The other was from a young man wearing a smart T shirt. He continually said *'I will make sure my men do this. They will be here at 8am on the dot'*.

Yes, he was in charge. Woe betide any of his team who were late or damaged any of our goods. He made us feel confident. Well, the quotation was over £1000.

And guess which company I went to..... So the moral is - be in charge. Your customers will like it and you will be able to command higher prices.

Be clean and fresh

People will always prefer to buy from clean and smart looking individuals. I have a friend who is a plumber. His business is expanding every year, and he is not cheap. How does he do it? Well, he says the most important thing is - always be clean. He has at least three clean company t-shirts with him, and spare shoes and trousers.

He changes before he makes a quotation. Having a spare t-shirt costs him £15, but that allows him to command a significantly higher price. He isn't cheap, but he is clean, and he is doing really well.

Advertise in the road you have worked in.

After you have finished, ask permission to tell the rest of the residents of the road what you have done.

Get leaflets made up with few blank lines in the middle.

And then add:-

***Another happy customer - we have just done work for 'Mrs Jones at 28 London Road'.
Then distribute in the area.***

This is the easiest form of advertising, and it works. Put a smart looking board outside the house for a few days. Of course ask for permission first, but a happy customer will not mind.

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Network

There are many gardeners out there who will get asked about trees. Make contact with them and offer them a referral fee, even if it is just a few beers. Referrals are the number one source of business for many Tree Surgeons.

Clear Up

This seems obvious, but always sweep up and take away the rubbish or cuttings. Yes, of course this costs more, as local tips charge you for it. But the customer would rather pay £100 more and look on a tidy garden than watch a pile of leaves blow around for the sake of a few pounds. Indeed, if everything is left tidy it is a great advert for all the recommendations that you will get.

Take Photos

Take photos particularly where there is an impressive before and after contrast. Maybe put some on your website and keep in a portfolio catalogue to show people when you are doing quotations.

You are selling

You may be an Arborist but in many ways to be a real success you also need to see yourself as a salesman. This isn't just about being able to talk the talk. It is about the whole concept of your business structure and its image. Remember from the minute the phone goes, to the public walking past your truck, you are selling. Adopt the principle that you don't do quotations. You do sales presentations. Price is **not** the most important factor when obtaining more business. It's about convincing your prospective clients that you will do a **GREAT** job, at a fair price.

Insurance

And of course have the right insurance from a specialist company!

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