

Before You Spend a Dollar on *Marketing*

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Most solo business owners jump straight to tactics: a new Instagram, a paid ad, a redesigned logo, before the foundation is in place. Then the tactics don't work, and it feels like marketing doesn't work. It usually isn't the tactics. It's what's missing underneath them. These are the seven things worth fixing first, in order of impact.

01 Your Google Business Profile is doing more work than your Instagram

If you serve local clients, a complete and verified Google Business Profile is the single highest-return 30 minutes you'll spend on marketing. Most owners have never claimed theirs. Name, address, phone, category, hours, photos, service description.

02 Your website has one job

Tell people what you do, who it's for, and how to contact you, in that order, in the first 10 seconds. **This is a messaging problem, not a design problem.** Redesigning before fixing the message just makes the confusion look more expensive.

03 You need to know if anyone is finding you

Google Search Console is free and shows exactly what search terms are bringing people to your site, or not bringing them. Most solo owners are flying blind about whether they have any organic traffic at all.

04 An email list beats 10,000 followers

You own your email list. You don't own your Instagram audience. A platform change and you've lost access to everyone who followed you. Even 50 people who actually want to hear from you beats a thousand who don't.

05 One social channel, maintained, beats four abandoned

A consistent presence on one platform sends a better signal than four profiles with posts from 2022. Pick the channel where your clients are and show up there. You don't have to be everywhere.

06 Your "why you" can't just be your credentials

Credentials get people to consider you. Story is what makes them choose you. What do clients get from you they couldn't get elsewhere? That's the part that converts a browser into a client.

07 Build the system before you build the campaign

Ads, calendars, and email campaigns fail when there's nothing underneath them: no clear message, no way to capture leads, no follow-up. Infrastructure first, then tactics. Every time.

THE HONEST VERSION

Most of this isn't complicated. It's time-consuming, unfamiliar, and easy to keep putting off when you're also running a business by yourself. That's what fractional support is for: someone who knows exactly what to fix first, does the work, and builds it to outlast the engagement.

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SYSTEMS THAT HOLD.