



#8 Licensed! Marketing Your Home

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Module 8 – Licensed! Marketing Your Home

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Licensed! Marketing Your Home!

Introduction

Now that you are licensed, it is time to tell people about your AFH. As the owner of an adult family home, it is your job to make sure your house is full, preferably with a waiting list, and have a plan for filling any beds that become available. After this class, you will know the fundamentals of good marketing and be able to apply them to your own marketing activities successfully.

It is also time to purchase the amount of liability insurance you are required to have. You must be able to provide proof of insurance when requested by the department.

What Do You Know?

1. You only need liability insurance if you hire professionally licensed staff
2. It is important to know who your competition is
3. A Tagline is a phrase that helps customers remember your AFH

Learning Objectives

At the end of this module, you will be able to ...

- Explain what marketing is
- Identify your market
- Summarize your target market
- Develop your marketing plan

Liability Insurance

(WAC [388-76-10191](#), WAC [388-76-10192](#))

We covered liability Insurance in Module 3 – Becoming a Small Business. **Now that you are licensed**, remember that liability insurance must be purchased **before** whichever of the following events happens first:

- **You admit your first resident after you are issued a new AFH license or**
- **10 working days have passed since your license was issued.**

You must notify the Complaint Resolution Unit if there is any lapse in your liability insurance coverage.



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What is Marketing?

Marketing refers to all activities a company does to promote and sell products or services to consumers.

Marketing is the process of getting potential clients or customers interested in your products and services. The keyword in this definition is "process". Marketing involves researching, promoting, selling, and distributing your products or services. [Cyberclick](#)



Marketing includes building and maintaining customer relationships. Networking is part of the work too. Networking is interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts and relationships. This means writing thank you notes or emails, quickly returning calls and emails, and meeting with potential clients. Learn more about networking later in the module.

The Four Ps of Marketing

Marketing makes use of the "marketing mix," also known as the four P's:

- Product – What you are selling
- Price – How much you are charging for your product
- Place – Where you are selling your product
- Promotion – How you going to let people know you have a product to sell

At its core, marketing seeks to take a product or service, identify its ideal customers, and draw the customers' attention to the product or service available.

Why Marketing is Important

The goal of owning an AFH is to provide personal care, special care, room, and board to individuals who will live there. To achieve this goal, you need to:

- Have enough paying residents to keep your business running
- Provide a steady income for you to pay your expenses
- Have enough money to pay yourself

In module 3, Becoming a Small Business, you identified the number of residents you need to meet your break-even point. If you make anything less than that, you will be adding money to your business to help support it or you could go out of business.

One of the most common ways for new AFH owners to get new residents is to work with a placement agency. Placement agencies are expensive. You can end up paying the agency 100% to 120% or more of the resident's monthly payment. We cover working with referral agencies in Module 9 - Getting Ready.

Marketing could help you bring in residents at a fraction of the cost of one agency placement.

Identifying Your Market

Your knowledge of the market for long-term care is the foundation of a successful marketing plan. You need to be familiar with the general picture of the adult family home market in your area and describe this in the marketing section of your business plan.

Adult family homes are part of the larger long-term care market. The market consists of people seeking long-term care, families that need short-term respite, individuals who need short-term recovery care before they return home, as well as professionals and businesses providing various long-term care solutions. Those providing long-term care alternatives to your potential customers will be your competitors. Direct and indirect competitors include other long-term care providers in your area.

It's never too early to begin learning about your market. Talking with other people and businesses (colleagues and competitors), potential customers, the trade association, and others associated with the industry will give you valuable information and insights. Before opening your doors for business, it is essential to know what other similar products or services are offered in your area; that way you will know what is needed and what is not, how you can position your business within the community, what prices to charge, how to market your services, and who will give you referrals.

NOTE: Review “Know Your Competition” in Module 3 – Becoming a Small Business.



ON YOUR OWN ACTIVITY: Define Your Target Market

Use the [AFH Locator](#)

Work on answering the following questions at home. The answers can help you determine your market:

1. Find three AFHs in your zip code area. What is the competition in your area?
 - a. Is there a waiting list? _____
 - b. How many are waiting? _____
2. Explore your desire to offer a specific type of service. Use the special resident population discussion from Module 1 – I’m Interested. Identify who your target market might be.
 - a. The types of residents I prefer to care for are:

 - b. Unique or special services (for example, religious-based, special-needs adults):

 - c. What additional services might adults in my area be interested in?

3. Do you have special talents, skills, interests, and/or training that would allow you to meet the unmet needs of adults in your target market?

4. Now, narrow it down! Of the potential market for my services defined in Step 1, I will target:

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Typical Resident Profile – Develop Your Resident Avatar

A resident avatar is a detailed profile of your ideal resident. It doesn't make assumptions or categorize people into groups. The avatar focuses on one person and outlines everything about them. It goes into much greater depth than a regular marketing persona, providing marketers with many more targeting tools.

It's crucial that you create a resident avatar of your ideal resident, the type of resident that would be a good fit for your niche or specialty. Your ideal resident is somebody you really want to have in your adult family home.

They will be the type that will be able to pay you the amount you require as a private pay resident, or if they are a Medicaid client, they will have a daily rate that you can build your business around.



Example Resident Avatar:

- 32-year-old Male, Downs Syndrome, works part-time, able to communicate verbally
- 78-year-old, Female, mentally aware, in a wheelchair, has a hearing aid

Typical Resident Avatar	
Age:	Location:
Gender:	Past Occupation:
Marital Status:	Retirement Income:
Number/Age of Children:	Other:
Goals and Values	Challenges & Pain Points
Goals:	Challenges:
Values:	Pain Points:
Information Sources	Objection & Role in the Process
Books:	Objections to the placement:
Magazines:	
Blogs/Websites:	Role in selection process:
Other:	

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Typical Resident Family Profile – Develop Resident’s Family Avatar

You will also need to develop a Resident’s Family Avatar.

This is typically a family member who has the responsibility of taking care of the resident or has the Power of Attorney or guardianship of the resident. It may be a child who works locally but is unable to provide the care themselves, or they may live in another area and want their parent to be able to stay where they are the most comfortable.



Example:

- Your resident’s son lives out of state, his mother wants to live close to home. He can travel to visit a couple times per year. This is a private pay resident.
- The daughter of an elderly man who has Alzheimer’s. He is unable to remember anything that has happened in the last few years. Can eat when prompted. He is on Medicaid.

Typical Resident’s Family Avatar	
Age:	Occupation:
Gender:	Job Title:
Marital Status:	Annual Income:
Number/Age of Children:	Level of Education:
Location:	Other:
Resident’s Relationship:	
Goals and Values	Challenges & Pain Points
Goals:	Challenges:
Values:	Pain Points:
Information Sources	Objection & Role in the Process
Books:	Objections to the placement:
Magazines:	
Blogs/Websites:	Role in selection process:
Other:	

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What Potential Residents and their Families Consider:

- Location – is it convenient
- Trust – do they trust you and your staff?
- Competence and professional skills
- Safety measures, protocols – do you give them peace of mind?
- Quality of your work – safety and professionalism
- Value they will get – get more than you pay for
- Likeability – positive and pleasurable to work with
- Why you do this – they join a great cause

Specialty Target Market

If you are concentrating on a specialty for your AFH, you may want to focus your marketing on a specific community. For example, you specialize in the behavioral/offender niche, you will want to customize both your marketing message and your target market area where you can reach those clients.

Suppose you are a house that supports independent living for Individuals with intellectual disabilities. You will want to work closely with other organizations that support the same types of clients. There are houses in Issaquah that work closely with an organization called Life Enrichment Options as well as At Work. These organizations help place potential residents in independent living environments as well as help them find jobs. They also provide job coaching services in addition to creative and healthy activities to enrich the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

Identifying the Unique Features and Benefits of your AFH

When identifying your homes features, consider items such as:

- Close, family-like relationships
- Individualized planning for activities
- Special services provided
- Nutritional meals
- Unique outings
- Creative and healthy activities
- Registered nurse on-site or on-call
- Specialized training



Think about how these features would benefit a resident or their family. What problem are you solving for them? Consider items such as:

- Safety
- Security
- Social interaction
- Enrichment opportunities
- Meeting medical needs

Unique features can make an AFH more appealing and valued by the resident and their families. Consider these questions to identify your “uniqueness”.

- What unique features and benefits will appeal and add value to my AFH?
- Which features will make my business more attractive?

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- When can I add them? Can I add them now? Should I add them after (months/years) in business, after I have _____ adults enrolled, or after I’m receiving \$ _____ per month in profit/income?
- What features would appeal to me if I were looking for an AFH?
- What would make me choose one AFH over another?
- How would I know which AFH offered better value to me over another?

Think about the benefits of the location and appearance of your adult family home. Your location might be important to communicate to potential residents and their families. The appearance of the home communicates a lot about your business.



ACTIVITY – Your AFH Features and Benefits

1. Identify 3 features and benefits of your AFH and what makes them unique.
2. Working from left to right, list them on the chart below.

Features <i>What are my business' unique features?</i>	Benefits <i>What is the ultimate benefit of this feature to my potential resident? Why would they want it?</i>	Uniqueness <i>HOW is this feature, and its benefits, unique and different from other providers?</i>
Example: We have a lip-free or curb less shower stall	Example: The resident can easily get in and out of the shower even if their mobility is impaired	Example: It's larger than most shower stalls so it's easier to navigate if you have a large chair and safer to get in and out. My competition has a regular tub or an older non-remodeled bath.
1.		
2.		
3.		

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Geographical Target Market

Geographical Marketing is one of the 4 “Ps of Marketing: “Place”.

You need to consider the location of your business. Whether it is urban such as downtown Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, or rural such as Sequim, Othello, or Quincy. You will be pulling prospective clients from all around your AFH Location.

If you are in an urban or suburban area you can choose a relatively small area to distribute your marketing material. For example: if your home is in the Capital Hill area of Seattle, you probably would not want to concentrate your marketing in Ballard or Green Lake neighborhoods.



On the other hand, if you have your home in Prosser, you would probably want to extend your marketing outreach from Yakima all the way to the Tri-Cities area.



ACTIVITY – Your AFH Location

Answer the following questions concerning your location. Remember the features and the benefits activity you did above? Apply that kind of thinking to this activity as well.

1. The features of my business’s geographic location can be described as:
2. The benefits to my customers of this location are:
3. The features of my adult care environment can be described as:
4. The benefits of this environment are:
5. Is your home appealing to customers from the street?
6. What simple things can you do to make your home and yard look cheerful, inviting, and safe?
7. Are there other homes or buildings nearby that need attention?
8. What can you do to draw attention away from or disguise the appearance of other less attractive homes or buildings around you?
9. Are there enough parking places?

Developing Your Business Identity

Business Name

Your business name should be descriptive and memorable.

The most successful business names are those that clearly describe what the business does. Unless you are building a massive name brand, like “Giorgio Armani,” using your own name may not be ideal. No one knows who you are, and it makes it exceedingly difficult for consumers to find you online – a necessity in today’s business environment. Also, avoid using acronyms as much as possible, first-time consumers may not understand them. Keep in mind, consumers and families remember business names that are positive, descriptive, and brief.

Undesirable Name Examples

- “Zara’s AFH” Most consumers do not know what an “AFH” is, and it is very unlikely for random consumers searching for senior care in your neighborhood to enter “Zara” as a search term.
- “Brookside House, Inc.” What type of house is this? What do they do? Consumers and families will have more questions and confusion, making it more likely to move on to another listing. This is especially true if their first thought is something like, “Is this a half-way house?”

More Desirable Name Examples

- “Magnolia Adult Family Home”
- “Magnolia Senior Care”
- “Alzheimer’s Care of Shoreline”

Notice that the business names above are what we call “keyword rich” meaning that your business listing is substantially more likely to appear on Internet searches.

If you haven’t thought of a business name already, have your classmates help you come up with some ideas.

Here are a few examples of unique business names that stand out to consumers:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Sweet Mama’s Bakery | • Charlotte’s Cake Creations |
| • Delightful Deliveries Catering | • Main Street Bookkeeping Services |
| • Creative Kids Child Care | • Green Cleaning Services |
| • Crystal’s Beaded Jewelry | • Perfect Pet Photography |

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Tagline

A tagline is a phrase that appears on your marketing materials, often underneath your business name. A good tagline will help customers remember what is special about your business.

If you think of your business name as the main title of an article, the tagline would be the sub-title. Aim to capture the essence of what your business does or summarize its greatest quality. It should be as simple and short as possible, but long enough to be clear.

The most effective taglines are NOT catchy, slick, funny, or impressive, but they are successful in getting the reader to read further and hopefully act. For example:

Magnolia Adult Family Home

Safe, Competent and Loving Care for Mom



Logo

A logo is a picture or symbol that is easily recognizable and includes a design element such as business name, symbol, specific colors, and trademark. You put this on your marketing materials to help create an image of your business. It makes your marketing materials unique and recognizable; it should tie into your business name.

You can find many examples to use from your own pictures, through clip art, or the Internet.

There are many ways for you to create a logo for yourself or have one created for you. You can start by looking through standard clip-art images from on-line photo/image depositories such as:

- depositphotos.com
- freepik.com
- vexels.com
- shutterstock.com
- gettyimages.com

Consider using a professional to give you options for your logo. There are many on-line services that can help you for a fee. Many, such as the ones below, have options that will fit almost any budget:

- Fiverr.com
- VistaPrint.com
- 99designs.com

Consider the following reflective questions:

- Which logo most suggests what you are offering at your adult family home?
- Does your logo represent the uniqueness of your business?

Look online to see what names and logos are used in other areas or cities. You might see a name or logo that you had not thought of, but that inspires you to create something uniquely yours. **Remember not to copy another business' name or logo.**



ON YOUR OWN ACTIVITY: Create Your Business Name, Logo, and Tag Line

Developing Your Marketing Message

When developing your marketing messaging, be careful what you say. Using phrases such as, “lowest cost”, “most affordable”, or “we’ll beat any price” can make you look desperate to get residents. Customers may assume your offering/services is of low value. In Module 3 – Becoming a Small Business, we talked about topics that may impact your pricing. Those same strategies apply to your marketing.

- Develop unique offerings – what makes you different?
- Specialize – What is your niche? We talked about different populations in Module 1 –I’m Interested
- Offer more VALUE
- Create scarcity – are you that only home that offers...
- Are you an expert?

Once you’ve developed your marketing message, you’ll need to develop materials to put it on. Think of your marketing materials as ways to communicate to your target market. The materials you distribute should have a professional and consistent look. This will help people recognize your business.

Use several different types of marketing materials. They should include your business name, tag line and/or logo, and your contact information. Distribute as often as possible.

Types of Marketing

Offline Marketing – Marketing Materials

Offline Marketing includes physical materials handed out to potential clients. Look for distribution opportunities such as an open house, during a tour, or at a conference:

- **Business Cards**

Business cards are inexpensive, and you can easily carry them with you to hand out to people. Your business card should include your:

- business name
- your name
- your tagline and/or logo
- Your address and phone number(s)
- e-mail address
- website



Use the back of your business card to share unique benefits of your adult family home. This will allow you show how you are different from your competitors.

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HINT: Consider not putting your full address on your business card. Instead list your town or neighborhood to give a prospective client the general area you are in. Follow with a statement inviting prospective clients to contact you for a private open house. This way you will not have someone just show up and request a tour when you are in the middle of getting your residents up and ready for the day.

Make your business cards as soon as you settle on your business name. You can find a local print shop or office supply store to print them or order them online. Explore! Consider options such as:

- Rounded corners
- Square cards
- Embossing for a professional presentation
- Foil Accent
- Folding Business cards
- Extra Thick
- Matte
- Glossy
- Plastic

Hand them out at every opportunity!

- **Pamphlets/Brochures**

- *Know what your reader wants.*

Prepare your brochure from the reader's point of view. What are your readers' concerns? What do they need to know before they make their decision to visit your home? Try writing down all the questions you hear from your customers and try and answer them in your brochure.

- *Motivate your reader to look inside.*

The first page your reader will see is the front cover. Get it wrong and you will likely lose a potential client. Start with the benefits of your services or use thought-provoking statements that motivate the reader to pick up the brochure and open it.

Communicate to the reader that there's something inside just for them – an exclusive invitation, a free report, a special discount, or a special tour of your home.

Feature your logo and/or some other design or picture. Make sure it is something that looks good when copied or printed. Ensure you use good quality paper. Photos are good (get written permission if you use a photo of someone else's image), but they sometimes don't copy well, so test it out before printing a whole batch.

- *List the contents*

In brochures of eight pages or more, a table of contents is essential. Design it so that the table of contents stands out from the rest of the text. Use the contents to sell the brochure. Keep it simple and use your key selling points in your headings.

Address your reader's needs by listing the benefits of your services.

Don't get carried away with your own interests. Talk about your reader, not yourself.

Clients care about benefits that they will get by using your services and not the services

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of someone else. For example, “We specialize in Alzheimer care and therefore involve the residents in games that stimulate their minds.”

Use testimonials from current or past clients. If you don’t have any yet, ask customers to write a recommendation and ask their permission to use a quote in your marketing materials – they will probably be happy to help. Try to use quotes that relate to the benefits you want to emphasize. For example, “Game time is the most fun my mother has had in years, and she is more engaged and alert!” – Jane W.

If you list your prices, don’t do a large printing, as they may change, and you will have wasted money.

- *Give directions*

Organize your brochure so readers can flip through the pages and easily find what they want. Provide clear signposts or headlines throughout the brochure.

- *Ask for action*

Regardless of how you organize your brochure, there's only one way to end it: Ask for action. If you want your reader to respond, consider obtaining an 800 number (review the costs), reply card, or some form of response mechanism.

- **Flyers**

A flyer is also an essential part of your marketing plan. You can put more information on a flyer than on a business card, and it can be used in many ways. You can post flyers on bulletin boards, hand them out, or mail them (either folded or cut to large postcard size).

Have someone help you edit it to make sure it looks professional. It should be error free with an inviting format and bright colors. Include your contact information, as well as your tagline.



Look at sample marketing materials for ideas. If you are far along in the licensing process, it is a good strategy to market your home before opening.

- **Promotional mugs or T-shirts**

Promotional mugs or T-shirts add a personal touch and are often used or worn in public settings and can support your marketing plans as well.

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- **Newsletters**

A newsletter can be a great way to promote your business and keep clients interested in coming back. It can be written on a computer or written out by hand. Start by creating one quarterly, and if it's well-received and you have the time, do one every month.

Send it (by mail and e-mail) to past and current clients, people who have called about your program (you should keep a log with contact information), friends, and anyone else you can think of. Also, have recent copies available wherever you sell your product or service.

As with your other materials, it should look similar and contain your business name, contact information, tagline, and logo. Format it so that it is fun and easy to read. Include upcoming activities and events, promotional specials, interesting articles or news, features, and anything else you'd like to share about your business.



Online Marketing

Online Marketing is anything that is promoted on the Internet or in digital format. You may need professional help to optimize your online presence.

- **Your AFH Website**

When most people start looking for a place to take care of their loved one, they will begin their search online and most of them will use their smartphones instead of a computer. As you develop your website, keep this in mind. If your site does not display on a smart phone, you may lose customers.

A professional business website gives your business legitimacy. People expect even the smallest of businesses to have a website and not having one raises concerns in prospective clients.

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- **Social Media Profiles**

One of the easiest and fastest ways to create an online presence for your AFH is to make a page on one of the social media platforms. When choosing which one to use and maintain, you want to ask yourself which would the decision makers for your potential clients use?

- Facebook
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn
- Twitter

- **Google My Business (GMB) for Local Marketing**

GMB is a tool that lets you create and manage a business profile on Google business listing and Google maps. This will create a professional result when someone searches you on Google.

With GMB, you can answer questions, set up alerts, and set up direct messaging when anyone searches your business name. You can highlight your business, services, and detail what makes your AFH unique. You can also use GMB Dashboard to get insights into your visitors and local search performance.

- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

SEO improves your site by increasing visibility to people searching for your services online. This works on all search engines such as Bing, DuckDuckGo (private search engine), Yahoo, and Google. SEO uses methods of wording and indexing on your website. When someone searches for a topic that is on your website, it comes to the top of the search engine. If you are interested in hiring someone to do SEO for your website, look for a business familiar with AFHs.

- **Search Engine Submissions**

This is the process of submitting a request to various search engines to be included in its index of websites. This is not the same as SEO. This just alerts the Search Engine that your website is there and ready to be indexed.

You can go to each individual search engine and add your pages to the ADD URL form for each website or you can use a software program to submit your pages for you to most of the top 100 search engines.

- **Online Directories**

There are many online directories where you can list your business and website that will drive traffic to your site. They are usually broken down by topic, location, or even just general listings. This does not necessarily help your website gain reputation because the links are not very powerful, but they can be of assistance if you are not getting any traffic at all. Typically, they can provide you with free listings. Here are a few examples:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| ○ Yahoo.com | ○ Yelp.com |
| ○ BOTW.com | ○ Foursquare.com |
| ○ AboutUs.com | ○ Yellowpages.com |
| ○ Spoke.com | ○ ChamberofCommerce.com |
| ○ BingPlaces.com | ○ BBB.com |

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Marketing Plan

A Marketing Plan is a plan of marketing actions to be taken in a specific order or during a calendar month, quarter, or year. This allows your business to plan on the best and most productive way to spend their marketing budget with the greatest results possible.



When creating a Marketing Plan, you want to ensure that you lay out your marketing tactics, goals, and strategies to allow you to keep your AFH at resident capacity as much as possible throughout the year.

Most AFH owners look at marketing as an expense that they want to try to minimize. But if you look at it properly, this really is an investment that allows you to minimize the number of days your home has empty beds. **When asked, many AFHs have Marketing as the 3rd largest expense after their mortgage and employees.**

If you look at the expense of an empty bed you will see that it is one of the largest expenses an AFH will have. For example:

Little Bo Peep's Senior Living has 6 beds that over the last year has lost several of their residents. Edna, in room 2, passed away in February and it took 2 months to find a replacement client. Thelma, in room 5, decided to move closer to her children in South Carolina, so she moved out in August, and it took until November to fill this room. And then John, in room 6, broke his hip and had to move to the hospital in October and his room has been empty for the last 3 months.

- Edna paid \$5,500 per month $\$5,500 \times 2 = \$11,000$
 - Thelma paid \$4,000 per month $\$4,000 \times 3 = \$12,000$
 - John paid \$7,500 per month $\$7,500 \times 3 = \$22,500$
- The total missed income was \$45,500

If Little Bo Peep Senior Living had spent \$1,000 per month effectively marketing their beds, they could have been filled more quickly. Let's say that it still took 1 month each to find new residents, that would have been a cost savings of \$17,000. That is assuming that the new residents paid similar monthly service fees for ease of calculation.

Expenses occurred if the bed was only empty for a single month:

- Edna \$5,500
- Thelma \$4,000
- John \$7,500
- Total \$17,000

Marketing Expenses = \$12,000

Total Expenses = \$28,500 (\$45,500 - \$17,000)

Savings of = \$17,000 (\$45,500 - \$28,500)

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Creating a Marketing Calendar

Now that you have created some promotional materials and thought about how to attract your target audience, it's time to create a marketing action plan. For each of your methods and strategies you have identified, the marketing action plan outlines the specific event or action you will take to implement the strategy and increase sales.

Review the sample marketing plan for Caring Home below, and then use the marketing action plan to create your own plan for the next six months. You should be even more specific than the example. Include costs, locations to distribute flyers, and where to research or buy supplies and necessities. If you don't know a cost, make a note to research it as soon as possible. Always have a plan for at least six months into the future (12 months is even better). You'll want to include your marketing plan in the marketing section of your business plan.

Caring Home's Marketing Plan	
Month 1	Month 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create and distribute flyers• Design and order business cards• Call local ALTA/DDA office to let them know that you have been licensed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Record a friendly professional greeting for your business phone and cell phone voice mails• Send press releases to local papers• Ask for marketing ideas and referrals
Month 3	Month 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and update admission forms• Research cost of yard signs• Research cost of door hangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer current clients a finder's/referral fee• Search provider websites for ideas• Create a newsletter
Month 5	Month 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distribute more flyers• Join an AFH Association• Clean up the yard, plant flowers (season dependent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start a photo album• Create a birthday/holiday schedule for cards



ACTIVITY: Develop Your Six-Month Marketing Plan

Marketing Action Plan			
Month	Activities	Costs	Locations
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Know Your Competition was discussed in Module 3 – Becoming a Small Business. Knowing your competition is important in marketing. The more you know about all the options available for your potential residents, the more you can customize your marketing methods, that speaks directly to the reader and promotes the best choice for them.

Tips for Effective Networking

Networking is essential to the success of any business. Networking is a structured plan to get to know people who will do business with you or introduce you to those who will. It is important to learn networking skills as it helps one to interact with, learn from, and share experiences with others for mutual benefit. The best way to succeed at networking is to make a plan, commit to it, and execute your it. To make the best plan, ask yourself:

- What do I want to achieve?
- How many leads (prospects) do I want per month?
- What business organizations would benefit my business?
- How can I build my image and my business's image?
- What would I like to volunteer to do in the community?

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The key with networking is to become proactive. Use the tips below, to develop your own approach for including networking as one of your marketing strategies in your marketing plan.



- Set a goal to meet five or more new people at each event. Whenever you attend a group, whether a party, a mixer, or an industry luncheon, make a point of heading straight for people you don't know.
- Try one or two new groups per month. Determine what business organizations and activities you would best fit into. It may be the chamber of commerce, the arts council, a museum society, a civic organization, a baseball league, a computer club or the PTA. Attend every function you can that promote your business goals and customer/prospect interaction.
- Carry your business cards with you everywhere. You never know when you might meet a key contact, and if you don't have your cards with you, you lose out. Take your cards to church, the gym, parties, and the grocery store – even on walks with the dog.
- Get active. People remember and do business with leaders.
- Be friendly and approachable. Pretend you are hosting the event. Make people feel welcome. Find out what brought them there and see if there's any way you can help them. Introduce them to others, make business suggestions or give them a referral. Not only will you probably make a friend but putting others at ease helps your own self-consciousness. A side benefit: What goes around comes around. If you make the effort to help others, you'll soon find people helping you.
- Be willing to give to receive. Networking is a two-way street. Don't expect new contacts to shower you with referrals and business unless you are equally generous. Follow up on your contacts; keep in touch. Always share information or leads that might benefit them. You'll be paid back tenfold for your thoughtfulness.
- Keep a record of contacts. Start and maintain a database of the contacts in your network that includes their name, email address, phone number, as well as how, when, and where you met with any additional pertinent notes to help jar both your memory as well as your contact's memory. Continue adding to this database and make it a point to keep in touch with any appropriate news or possibly pass along an article of interest.
- Develop a short, concise 30-60 second speech of who you are and what you do.

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VIDEO: [Business Networking: "Make People Like You in 90 sec" by Nicholas Boothman - YouTube](#)

The Adult Family Home Council (AFHC), ([Become a member - Adult Family Home Council](#)) offers membership **prior** to being licensed as an AFH. The Council can support pre-licensed members by offering:

- Networking and mentorship from fellow providers
- Application support
- Access to an online library of sample forms and policies.
- Educational courses
- Individualized support and resources

You can also click on “Find a Home” on the AFHC website. This will display homes in that area that are members of the AFHC.

Thanks to Joseph Spada and Paul Galasso on providing How to Market Your AFH content

Summary Review

In This Module We Learned...

- The required time frame for buying liability insurance
- What marketing is and the importance of good marketing
- How to determine your target market
- How to define your marketing identity
- How to create a marketing plan
- What networking is and the critical role it plays in marketing your AFH

Test Your Knowledge

True or False:



1. You have 6 months to obtain your liability insurance after you receive your license.
2. A good marketing plan can help you keep your home full.
3. Networking is essential to the success of your business.

Get Ready for Your Next Class



- Read assigned modules

Acronyms Used in this Module

Acronym	Description
AFH	Adult Family Home
AFHC	Adult Family Home Council
GMB	Google My Business

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Acronym	Description
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
HCA	Home Care Aide
NA-C/CNA	Nursing Assistant – Certified/Certified Nursing Assistant
NAR	Nursing Assistant - Registered
DSHS	Department of Social and Health Services
4 Ps	Product, Price, Place, Promotion

Revision Table

Date	Volume	Changes	Page(s)
1/2025	V5.2	STUDENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor grammar, formatting corrections• Added/removed, and repaired links throughout• Added Summary Review	

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