

South Dakota Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

Newsletter

May 2024



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Navigating Government Contracts for Small Construction and Transportation Companies

by Project Solutions Inc. Team

Securing government contracts through Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and Requests for Quotations (RFQs) can be a game-changer for small construction and transportation companies. These opportunities not only provide a steady stream of projects but also contribute to business growth and stability. However, successfully navigating the complex world of government procurement requires careful research, strategic planning, and a thorough understanding of the bidding process at distinct levels—city, county, state, and federal. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore the best ways for small construction and transportation companies to research and bid on RFPs and RFQs, unlocking the potential for lucrative government contracts.



Understanding the Landscape

Before diving into the intricacies of bidding, it's crucial to have a solid understanding of the procurement landscape at each government level. The processes, requirements, and regulations may vary, and familiarity with these differences will give your company a competitive edge.

1. The City/Municipal Level

- Identify local government agencies: Start by researching the city's official website and contacting relevant departments such as Public Works, Transportation, or Planning. Register with procurement databases or vendor lists specific to the city.
- Attend local procurement events: Participate in workshops, seminars, and networking events organized by the city. This provides an opportunity to connect with decision-makers, understand their needs, and learn about upcoming projects.
- Establish relationships: Cultivate relationships with key personnel involved in the procurement process. Understanding their preferences and requirements can significantly enhance your chances of winning contracts.

2. The County Level

- Explore county procurement websites: Counties often have dedicated procurement websites where they publish RFPs and RFQs. Regularly monitor these platforms to stay informed about upcoming opportunities.
- Attend county-specific events: Similar to city events, attending county-specific workshops and meetings allows your company to build relationships with procurement officers and gain insights into the county's procurement priorities.
- Collaborate with local chambers of commerce: Joining local business associations can provide valuable information on county-level procurement trends and opportunities.

3. The State Level

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- Research state procurement portals: Most states have centralized procurement websites where they post RFPs and RFQs. Familiarize yourself with the state's procurement regulations and requirements.
- Attend state-level conferences: Statewide conferences and trade shows are excellent opportunities to connect with government representatives, showcase your company's capabilities, and stay updated on state-level projects.
- Leverage minority business programs: Many states have initiatives to support minority-owned businesses. Certification under these programs can enhance your company's eligibility for certain contracts.

4. The Federal Level

- Register on [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov): The System for Award Management (SAM) is the official U.S. government system for awarding contracts. Registering on SAM is a prerequisite for federal contracts, grants, and other assistance programs.
- Research federal procurement websites: Agencies such as the General Services Administration (GSA) and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) publish RFPs and RFQs on their respective platforms. Regularly monitor these sites for opportunities aligned with your company's expertise.
- Explore subcontracting opportunities: Collaborating with prime contractors on federal projects can be a strategic entry point for small businesses. Subcontracting can provide valuable experience and establish credibility.

Bidding Effectively

Successfully bidding on government contracts requires a strategic approach and attention to detail. Here are essential tips for crafting winning proposals:

1. Thoroughly Review the Solicitation

- Understand the requirements: Carefully read and understand the solicitation documents, paying close attention to project specifications, deadlines, and evaluation criteria.
- Seek clarification: If any part of the solicitation is unclear, don't hesitate to seek clarification from the contracting officer. Clear communication can prevent misunderstandings and ensure your proposal meets the requirements.



2. Highlight What Sets You Apart

- Showcase past performance: Provide evidence of your company's past success in similar projects. Highlight relevant experience, successful outcomes, and client testimonials to demonstrate your capabilities.
- Emphasize unique selling points: Clearly articulate what sets your company apart from competitors. Whether it's cutting-edge technology, sustainable practices, or a commitment to diversity, emphasize your unique selling points.

3. Demonstrate Capacity and Capability

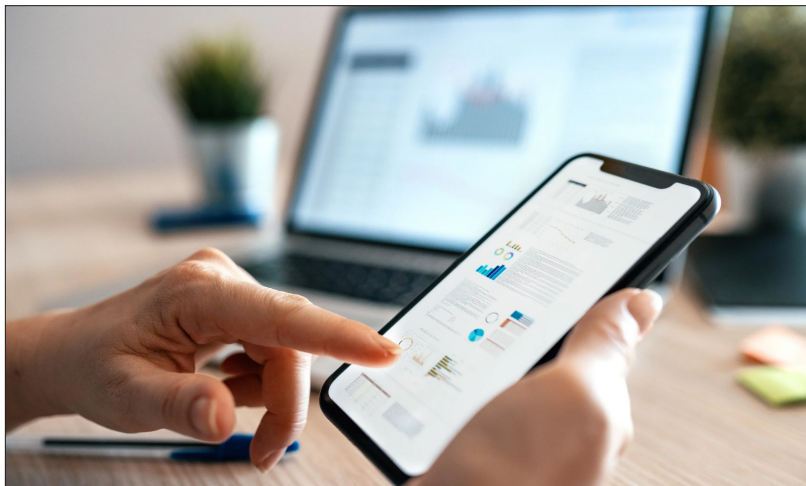
- Detail your team's qualifications: Provide resumes and qualifications of key personnel involved in the project. Emphasize their expertise, relevant experience, and any certifications or licenses they hold.

Continued on Page 3

- **Showcase equipment and resources:** Clearly outline the equipment, technology, and resources your company possesses to execute the project successfully. This instills confidence in the contracting agency regarding your capacity.

4. Develop a Comprehensive Budget

- **Accurate cost estimation:** Develop a detailed and accurate budget, considering all project costs. Ensure that your pricing is competitive while still allowing for a reasonable profit margin.
- **Transparent pricing:** Clearly break down your costs, making it easy for the contracting agency to understand how the budget aligns with the project scope. Transparent pricing builds trust and enhances your credibility.



5. Submit a Polished Proposal

- **Proofread and edit:** A well-written and error-free proposal reflects professionalism. Proofread your proposal thoroughly and consider seeking external editing assistance to ensure clarity and coherence.
- **Follow formatting guidelines:** Adhere to any formatting guidelines specified in the solicitation. Present your proposal in a clear and organized manner, making it easy for evaluators to navigate and find key information.

6. Submit on Time

- **Early submission:** Aim to submit your proposal well before the deadline. Late submissions are typically disqualified, regardless of the proposal's quality. Early submission also allows time for any unforeseen issues, such as technical glitches or delivery delays.

Securing government contracts through RFPs and RFQs can be a transformative opportunity for small construction and transportation companies. By understanding the intricacies of the procurement landscape at different government levels, building a strong online presence, preparing effectively, and bidding strategically, small businesses can position themselves for success in the competitive world of government contracts. With careful research, dedication to professional development, and a commitment to delivering quality services, small companies can thrive in the dynamic and lucrative government procurement sector.



Upcoming Bid Lettings

For June 5, 2024

1. BRO-B 8034(34) (PCN 0851); Hutchinson SWPPP = 1.29 AC; Structure (102' Continuous Concrete Bridge) & Approach Grading; Structure in Milltown on Benson Rd over Twelve Mile Creek
2. NH 0081(129)131 (PCN 09KF); Hamlin; Lighting; US81 – Fm 196th St to Golf Course Rd at Lake Poinsett
3. IM-P 0020(182) (PCN 06FU); Davison, Hanson SWPPP = 5.80 AC; Shoulder Strengthening, PCC Approach Pavement, Approach Slabs, Approach Guardrail & End Blocks, Polymer Chip Seal, Scour Protection; Various Locations Throughout the Mitchell Region
4. IM 0906(00)292, IM 0293(00)79, IM 0909(00)380 (PCN 09Q5, 09Q7, 09Q6); Aurora, Minnehaha; Heat Straightening & Girder Repair; I90E - 370th Ave over I90, 4.5 NW of Exit 296 (White Lake) & 457th Ave over I90, 1 SE of Exit 379 (Humboldt); I29 S - Exit 79 (12th St in Sioux Falls)
5. IM-NH-P 0022(89) (PCN 08RM); Lake, Minnehaha; Grinding, Joint & Spall Repair/Pavement Repair; US81 near Madison, Interstate 29, SD42 near Sioux Falls and SD11 at Brandon
6. NH 0012(298)106 (PCN 08M8); Corson SWPPP = 4.40 AC; Cold Milling Asphalt Concrete, Asphalt Concrete Surfacing (17k Tons) & Pipe Work; US12 - Fm 7 E of Perkins Co Line to 2 E, & at McIntosh
7. PH 000S(403) (PCN 06U2); Clay, Lincoln, Minnehaha; High Friction Surface Treatment; Various locations in the Sioux Falls and Yankton Areas
8. IM-NH-P 0021(186) (PCN 0971); Charles Mix, Douglas, Gregory, Hanson, Hutchinson, Lyman, Miner, Sanborn; Asphalt Surface Treatment; Various Locations in the Mitchell Area
9. NH-P 0032(43) (PCN 096J); Campbell, Corson, Dewey, McPherson, Walworth; Rout & Seal; Various Locations in the Mobridge Area

Welcome New DBEs!

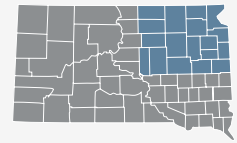
Newly Certified Firms:

National Sealant & Concrete, LLC

Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction | Concrete - joint sealing, crack filling, spall repair, remove and replace

Contact: nationalsealantandconcrete@gmail.com | (920) 225-9760
Crosby, MN 56441

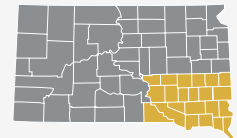
Regional Lettings



Aberdeen Region

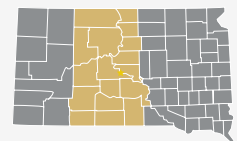
5/23/2024 | 00N-171 | i6yj
| Watertown | Modify Traffic Signal at US81 & 14th Ave in Watertown. (Replace 3 section heads w/4 section heads.)

5/30/2024 | 000i-171 | i7KC
| Aberdeen Region-wide | FY2025 Annual Aberdeen Region Guardrail Repair Contract.



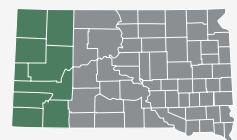
Mitchell Region

None



Pierre Region

5/21/2024 | 034-368 | i7DQ
| Haakon & Ziebach Counties | Bridge Deck Repair over the Cheyenne River on SD 34 (MRM 123.55 to MRM 123.87)



Rapid City Region

5/21/2024 | 085-471 | i7em
| Hwy 85 near Buffalo | Cattle Pass Extensions on Hwy 85 near Buffalo

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Announcements

The U.S. Department of Labor has issued a new rule that expands the scope of work and workers who will be subject to the prevailing wage requirements of the Davis-Bacon Act.

In order to clarify the new ruling, the SD Department of Transportation, the American Council of Engineering Companies of SD, and the SD Society of Professional Land Surveyors are hosting Andy Martone with Martone Legal to brief participants on the updated regulations and help them understand when they apply to engineering and land-surveying firm employees.

To learn more information or register for the webinar, [click here](#).

Did you know?

The DBE Final Rule changes went into effect on May 9, 2024. A summary of all the new rules with more details can be found here ([click to follow link](#)) Note, that while these rules went into effect on May 9, each state must develop forms and processes to align with the new requirements. The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) is working toward updating the materials and information pertaining to the rule changes. Watch for updated information as it is released and do not hesitate to contact Project Solutions with any questions or concerns.

Regional Lettings Continued

5/23/2024 | 000I-469, 000N-469 & 000P-469 | i7k7, i7k8, i7k9 | Rapid City Regionwide | Guard-rail Repair at various locations on a demand basis in Rapid City Region

5/23/2024 | 085-471 | i7el | Hwy 85 in Belle Fourche | US 85 Road Closed Sign

5/28/2024 | 016EB-452 & 016WB-452 | i7k1 & i7k2 | Hwy 16B near Rapid City | Asphalt Pavement Repair on Hwy 16B near Rapid City

5/28/2024 | 014A-451 | i7k0 | Hwy 14A near Cheyenne Crossing | Asphalt Repair on Hwy 14A near Cheyenne Crossing

[For listings please visit the SDDOT website's Regional Lettings here](#)

Upcoming Training & Events

May 30 **What's the Value of Your Business?**
Webinar
Thur., May 30, 2024
12:00 PM CDT | Free
[Learn More>](#)

June 4 **What, Why and How of Capability Statements**
Webinar
Tuesday, June 4, 2024
9:00 - 10:00 AM CDT | Free
[Learn More>](#)

June 12 **Deep Dive Into Construction Work in Progress**
Webinar
Wednesday, June 12, 2024
1:00 PM CDT | Free
[Learn More>](#)

June 27 **How to Create Social Media Content: From Conceptualizing to Posting Part 3 - Content**
In-person or Online
Prairie Shores Resort and Events | Madison, SD 57042
Thursday, June 27, 2024
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM CDT
Cost: \$25 In-Person | \$10 Virtual Ticket
[Learn More>](#)

Invitation to Bid

Invitation to Bid #1:

The Office of the State Engineer on behalf of the South Dakota Board of Regents

Electronic bids will be accepted by the State Engineer on behalf of the South Dakota Board of Regents at https://www.sd.gov/cs?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=9d2afb97b54a50b369b94de053afde until **May 28, 2024 at 3:00 PM MT** for the **Donald Young Center, DYC Facility Upgrades Design & Planning, Locker Room Renovations, Black Hills State University, Spearfish, South Dakota, OSE# R0824--03X.**

There will be an on-site pre-bid meeting on **May 20, 2024 at 10:00 AM MT**. All bidders can meet at the Donald Young Center upper lobby. This pre-bid meeting is optional but is the bidders only opportunity to review the site. Campus contact is Randy Culver, 605-642-6157, randy.culver@bhsu.edu. OSE contact is Cami Widvey, PE, cami.widvey@state.sd.us 605-910-4799.

Copies of the Plans and Specifications may be obtained by bidders at the office of Hollis & Miller, 1828 Walnut Street Ste 922, Kansas City, MO 64108. A/E Contact: Nicole Rezai, nrezai@hollisandmiller.com, 816-442- 7700. Anyone requesting, reviewing, or copying Plans and Specifications for this project agrees that they are doing so for the sole purpose of submitting a bid on the project. Bidder further agrees the Plans and Specifications are the sole property of the State.

Each bid in excess of \$100,000.00 must either pre-mail a certified check, cashier's check, or draft in the amount of 5% of the base bid and all add alternates and drawn on a State or National Bank to the Office of the State Engineer, Joe Foss Building, 523 East Capitol Ave, Pierre, SD 57501-3182, or upload a copy of their 10% bid bond to their electronic bid issued by a surety authorized to do business in the State of South Dakota and made payable to the Board of Regents (BOR) of the State of South Dakota. The BOR reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any irregularities therein. All active bids can be found here: <https://boa.sd.gov/state-engineer/adv-advertisements.aspx>

Office of the State Engineer

Published twice at the total approximate cost of_____.

Invitation to Bid #2:

The Office of the State Engineer on behalf of the South Dakota Board of Regents

Electronic bids will be accepted by the State Engineer on behalf of the South Dakota Board of Regents at https://www.sd.gov/cs?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=71010f2b97b18a50b369b94de053af87 until **May 28, 2024 at 3:30 PM MT** for the **Woodburn Hall, Theater Renovation, Demolition & Structural Improvements, Black Hills State University, Spearfish, South Dakota, OSE# R0823--06X.**

There will be an on-site pre-bid meeting on **May 20, 2024 at 1:30 PM MT**. All bidders can meet at the second floor theater entrance. This pre-bid meeting is optional but is the bidders only opportunity to review the site. Campus contact is Randy Culver, 605-642-6157, randy.culver@bhsu.edu. OSE contact is Cami Widvey, PE, cami.widvey@state.sd.us 605-910-4799.

Copies of the Plans and Specifications may be obtained by bidders at the office of Williams & Associates, 125 E. Colorado Blvd Suite A, Spearfish, SD 57783. A/E Contact: Jason Roberdeau, AIA, 605-642-2009, jason@williamsassociatesarch.com. Anyone requesting, reviewing, or copying Plans and Specifications for this project

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agrees that they are doing so for the sole purpose of submitting a bid on the project. Bidder further agrees the Plans and Specifications are the sole property of the State.

Each bid in excess of \$100,000.00 must either pre-mail a certified check, cashier's check, or draft in the amount of 5% of the base bid and all add alternates and drawn on a State or National Bank to the Office of the State Engineer, Joe Foss Building, 523 East Capitol Ave, Pierre, SD 57501-3182, or upload a copy of their 10% bid bond to their electronic bid issued by a surety authorized to do business in the State of South Dakota and made payable to the Board of Regents (BOR) of the State of South Dakota. The BOR reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any irregularities therein. All active bids can be found here: <https://boa.sd.gov/state-engineer/adv-advertisements.aspx>

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Invitation to Bid #3:

The Office of the State Engineer on behalf of McGough / Puetz Joint Venture

Electronic bids will be accepted by the State Engineer on behalf of McGough / Puetz Joint Venture via the Electronic Bidding Platform until **May 30, 2024 at 10:00 AM CT & 2:00 PM CT** for the **Health Laboratory, New DOH Public Health Laboratory, Capitol Complex, Pierre, South Dakota**, OSE# ACC22--28X. Please see Project Manual for specific bid times and individual links to the electronic bidding platform for each bid package.

There will be an on-site Pre-Bid Meeting on **May 16, 2024 at 1:00 PM CT**. All Bidders can meet at the main entrance to the Health Lab, located on the north side of the building. This pre-bid meeting is optional but is the bidders only opportunity to review the site. OSE Contact is Sara Norstrom, 605-280- 6606, Sara.Norstrom@state.sd.us.

Copies of the Plans and Specifications may be obtained by bidders at the Office of McGough / Puetz Joint Venture, 114 South Main Ave. Suite 100, Sioux Falls, SD 57104. Contact: Tanner Solberg, 605- 595-2995, tanner.solberg@mcgough.com. Anyone requesting, reviewing, or copying Plans and Specifications for this project agrees that they are doing so for the sole purpose of submitting a bid on the project. Bidder further agrees the Plans and Specifications are the sole property of the State.

Each bid in excess of \$100,000.00 must either pre-mail a certified check, cashier's check, or draft in the amount of 5% of the base bid and all add alternates and drawn on a State or National Bank to the Office of the State Engineer, Joe Foss Building, 523 East Capitol Ave, Pierre, SD 57501-3182, or upload a copy of their 10% bid bond to their electronic bid issued by a surety authorized to do business in the State of South Dakota and made payable to the McGough / Puetz Joint Venture. The McGough / Puetz Joint Venture reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any irregularities therein. All active bids can be found here: <https://boa.sd.gov/state-engineer/adv-advertisements.aspx>

Office of the State Engineer

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Invitation to Bid #4:

The Office of the State Engineer on behalf of Huff Construction Inc.

Electronic bids will be accepted by the State Engineer on behalf of Huff Construction Inc. via the electronic bidding platform until **May 29, 2024 at 3:00 PM CT** for the **Gerber Hall, Renovation-Deferred M&R, Northern State University, Aberdeen, South Dakota**, OSE# R0123--20X. Please see project manual for specific bid times and individual links to the electronic bidding platform for each bid package.

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There will be an on-site pre-bid meeting on **May 21, 2024 at 2:00 PM CT**. All bidders can meet at Johnson Fine Arts Center rm 181. This pre-bid meeting is optional but is the bidders only opportunity to review the site. Campus contact is Doug Leidholt, 605-228-5237, douglas.leidholt@northern.edu. OSE contact is Sean Campbell, 605-295-4165, sean.campbell@state.sd.us.

Copies of the Plans and Specifications may be obtained by bidders at the office of Huff Construction, 11 N. Dakota Street, Aberdeen, SD 57401. Contact: Mark Hanley, 605-226-0052, markh@huffconstructioninc.com. Anyone requesting, reviewing, or copying Plans and Specifications for this project agrees that they are doing so for the sole purpose of submitting a bid on the project. Bidder further agrees the Plans and Specifications are the sole property of the State.

Each bid in excess of \$100,000.00 must either pre-mail a certified check, cashier's check, or draft in the amount of 5% of the base bid and all add alternates and drawn on a State or National Bank to the Office of the State Engineer, Joe Foss Building, 523 East Capitol Ave, Pierre, SD 57501-3182, or upload a copy of their 10% bid bond to their electronic bid issued by a surety authorized to do business in the State of South Dakota and made payable to the Huff Construction Inc.. The Huff Construction Inc. reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any irregularities therein. All active bids can be found here: <https://boa.sd.gov/state-engineer/adv-advertisements.aspx>

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Small Town Branding: Standing Out In Your Rural Markets



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The charm of operating a small business in a rural or suburban community lies in the distinct characteristics it provides. Business can be conducted at a more relaxed pace, you're surrounded by familiar faces, and the strong sense of community becomes a cornerstone of your operations. But even in a cozy, close-knit setting, getting your business recognized takes strategic marketing and a focus on brand identity.

The Power of Your Brand

What's the story behind your business? Why does it exist? Defining your brand is about crafting the core message around what makes you special. Consider questions like:

- **Mission and Values:** What do you promise to customers? What larger purpose does your business serve?
- **Personality:** Are you approachable and friendly? Edgy and innovative? Down-to-earth and reliable?
- **Visuals:** How do your logo, color choices, and imagery convey the feeling of your brand?

Your brand's essence will guide everything you do and say about your business. It gives you a voice that speaks directly to the people you want to reach. Having a brand also substantiates your company and helps it become something bigger, even if the owner is the only employee.

Nurturing Relationships

Small communities thrive on connections. Don't be afraid to get personal, and never underestimate the influence of satisfied customers naturally spreading the good news about your business. Here's how to cultivate that priceless word-of-mouth:

- **Above and Beyond:** Treat every customer interaction as a chance to make a positive, memorable impression.
- **Local Partnerships:** Join forces with like-minded businesses. Recommend each other's services, run promotions together, or co-host small events.
- **Be Visible:** Support your community! Sponsor youth sports, participate in cultural events, volunteer, and be a friendly face at local happenings. Familiarity with your community at large (and not just your immediate colleagues and friends) helps keep you "front of mind".

Celebrate the "Local" Factor

Embrace the unique qualities of your rural or suburban setting – it's the authenticity your customers crave! Make "local" a pillar of your brand identity:

- **Images and Storytelling:** Feature your town's landmarks, natural features, or local characters in your visual branding (on your website, ads, etc.). Tell the story of your business and how it's intertwined with the community.
- **"Made Here" Wins:** If you source products locally or work with regional suppliers, make it known! This appeals to customers' desire to support their own.
- **Events Matter:** Get involved in annual celebrations, farmers' markets, or holiday parades, showing potential customers that you're invested in the place they call home.



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Digital Tools, Targeted and Precise

While the importance of digital marketing is undeniable, remember: rural and suburban areas don't require a tech overload to reach your audience. Here's how to make targeted choices that work for you:

- **Website as HQ:** Treat it as your digital storefront. Keep the design clean and mobile-friendly, prioritizing information like hours, location, and what you offer.
- **Social Media Strategy:** Choose one or two platforms popular with your ideal customers and be active! It's not just advertising; it's showing your human side.
- **Email's Not Outdated:** Gather customer emails and create a newsletter. It's great for sharing updates, promotions, or exclusive subscriber-only benefits.
- **Targeted Ads:** Consider paid advertising on social media where you can carefully target people living within your service area.

Think Outside the Box (But Not Too Far)

Just because you're in a rural or suburban area doesn't mean you need to be old-fashioned in your marketing approach. Try these ideas to stand out:

- **Guerrilla Marketing:** Think offbeat, attention-grabbing tactics - temporary street art, eye-catching signage, or unusual pop-up events. Make it fun and relevant to your brand, not just strange for the sake of it.
- **Loyalty Programs:** Everyone loves feeling special! Reward regular customers with tiered discounts, points systems, or access to exclusive perks.
- **Embrace the Old-School (Selectively):** While going all-digital isn't essential, don't neglect traditional media completely. Well-placed ads in local papers, flyers at community centers, or sponsoring a segment on a regional radio show can broaden your reach beyond the internet. In particular, look for corkboards or other areas where public and private businesses allow people to post flyers. Believe it or not, these still work!



Consistency and Celebration

Successful marketing takes time and consistent effort. Develop a plan, stick with it, and adjust as you go. Here's how to stay energized:

- **Calendar It:** Block out time for updating social media, writing newsletters - make it a habit, just like paying bills!
- **Track Your Wins:** Even just a notebook is enough. What worked well? Did a certain promotion bring in a rush of business? Learn from what's successful.
- **Celebrate Milestones:** Reaching a follower's goal, signing a big client, or just getting positive testimonials - acknowledge these wins and share your excitement with customers.

Marketing your small business in a rural or suburban area has unique perks and a few challenges. The sense of community, slower pace, and ability to tailor your message to the local landscape are all powerful advantages. By staying true to your brand, investing in relationships, embracing your "local" edge, and using targeted marketing tools, you can cultivate a fiercely loyal following and watch your small business thrive.