

MARKETING AS AN EXIT STRATEGY

BUSINESS OWNERS

SUCCESSION
ONTARIO 

WHAT MOST OWNERS DON'T REALIZE

- Revenue, equipment, and clients matter — **but they're not the whole picture**
- The real question: can your business **survive without you?**
- **Marketing** is one of the **clearest signals** buyers use to **evaluate**

HOW BUYERS THINK

3 questions every buyer asks:

- › Is **demand predictable**? Will customers **stay** after I take over?
- › Are **relationships transferable**? Or do they exist because of **you personally**?
- › Can the business **grow without the owner driving every sale**?

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A TALE OF TWO BUSINESSES



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BUSINESS A

Location: **GTA**
Revenue: **\$1.2M**



BUSINESS B

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RED FLAGS BUYERS SEE MOST OFTEN

Do any of these
sound familiar?

- ▶ "Most customers come from **referrals**"
- ▶ "The owner handles **all major relationships**"
- ▶ "We don't really **track leads**"
- ▶ "No **defined customer profile** — we just know our clients"
- ▶ "No **formal sales process** — it kind of just happens"

WHAT BUYERS PREFER INSTEAD

Clear customer segments

who buys and why

Multiple acquisition channels

no single point of failure

Repeatable, documented sales flow

that someone else can run

KNOW YOUR BEST CUSTOMER

Clarify your ideal customer.

- What industry are they in?
- What size are they?
- What problem were they solving when they found you?

This clarity signals focus to a buyer

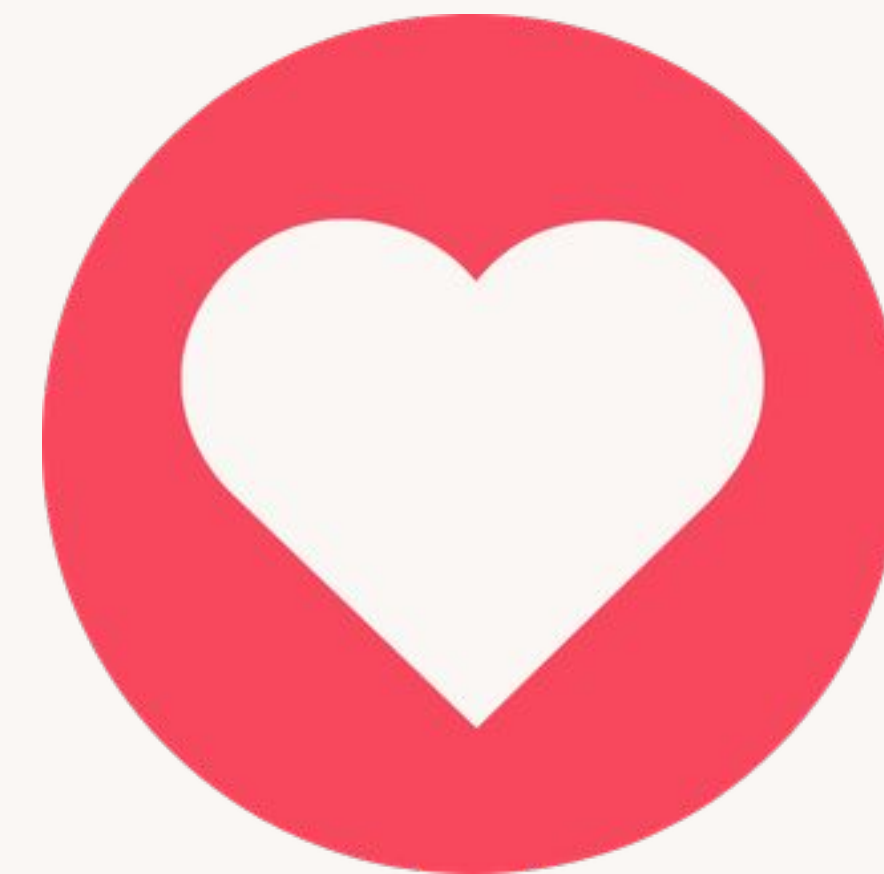
Mapping your

TRANSFERABLE CUSTOMER JOURNEY



ATTENTION

How do your customers find you?



DESIRE

What makes you the obvious choice?



LOYALTY

Why would customers stay if ownership changed?



INTEREST

What builds trust with your customer?



ACTION

How easy is it to buy from you?

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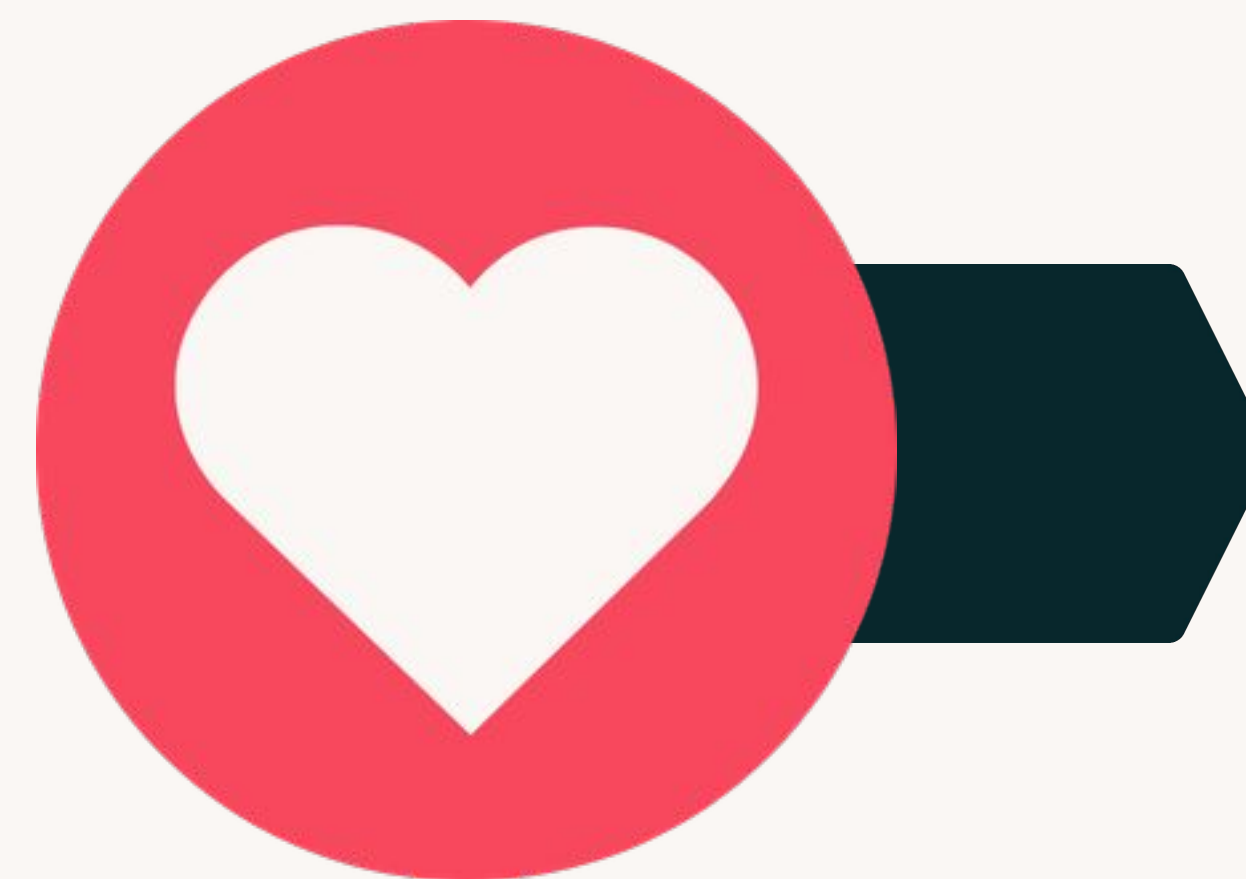
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DIGITAL PRESENCE AS PROOF OF DEMAND

3 questions a buyer asks about your online presence:

- Does this website **convert**?
(Not "does it look good")
- Are leads **trackable** by channel
and time period?
- Can ads be turned on/off with
measurable results?

**YOU CAN'T
SELL WHAT
YOU CAN'T
PROVE**

Cost per lead by channel

is your acquisition model understood and repeatable?

Lead-to-close conversion rate

is the pipeline predictable?

Customer acquisition cost vs. lifetime value

is the business healthy?

Repeat purchase / retention rate

do customers come back?

Owner-dependent vs. system-generated revenue

which is which?

VALUATION, NOT VANITY

What NOT to do before you sell

1. **Over-invest in brand refreshes**
Buyers don't pay for aesthetics
2. **Chase every channel**
2–3 that convert beats
8 that create noise
3. **Build systems only you understand**
That's a dependency, not a system
4. **Confuse busy with valuable**
Activity alone has no inherent value

MARKETING ROADMAP

Year 1

Clarify customer segments

Document who your best customers are

Map the customer journey

First contact to signed contract

Fix website fundamentals

Converts and tracks

Repeat purchase / retention rate

Do customers come back?

Start measuring

4–5 metrics, recorded monthly Rough data now beats perfect data later

MARKETING ROADMAP

Years 2-3

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Diversify lead sources

No single channel > 50% of new business

Document your sales and marketing process

So someone else can run it

Build email and retention systems

Relationships survive without you

Actively remove yourself

Test: does the business generate leads while you're on vacation?

MARKETING ROADMAP

Years 4-5

Don't reinvent

Optimize what's working?

Show metrics stable or growing

Over multiple years

Predictability over time

Equals premium valuation

Make the business easy to understand

Arrive at the table with evidence, not promises

**THANK
YOU**

**SUCCESSION
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