

BUILD A HOME ON HOUZZ

IF YOU DON'T YET HAVE A PRESENCE ON THIS DIGITAL JUGGERNAUT, YOU ARE MISSING VALUABLE CONNECTIONS WITH HOMEOWNERS.

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These days, everyone with a Facebook account considers themselves to be social media savvy. Add an account on YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and Snapchat, and you may think that your online business presence is successfully covered.

Your company may even be well represented and reviewed on the Better Business Bureau, Yelp, and other home service advising sites. But if you are not raising your flag on Houzz, you are still missing the boat.

Houzz may be the single best place to be because the people who use it are arguably your best prospects. They are homeowners heavily invested in building or renovating their properties.

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Houzz users are looking to transform their homes into personal showplaces and regularly visit the site for ideas, products, services, inspiration, news, reviews, and so much more. Now is the time for door dealers to take advantage of this ready-made audience.

The beginning

The home-focused social media community began when founders Adi Tatarko and Alon Cohen were remodeling their own home. After collecting referrals for home professionals, rummaging through stacks of magazines, and

GET IDEAS:
Houzz gives homeowners many filter choices for finding the perfect garage door. Search by style, size, color, type, specialty, number of cars, location, or budget



examining piles of uninspiring torn-out pages, they masterminded a better way.

In other words, they conceived Houzz.

Here is their own description of the site extracted from their About Us page:

"A place to browse and save beautiful home photos. A place to find the right design

and construction professionals. A place to connect with others who have been there too. Houzz started as a side project but has become a community of more than 40 million homeowners, home design enthusiasts and

home improvement professionals—across the country and around the world."

Whether you are starting a complete kitchen remodel or just looking for the perfect bedside table, the Houzz community of homeowners and professionals is here to help. And when you are ready to start your project, Houzz is the best way to get inspired, discover products and to find and collaborate with the perfect architect, designer or contractor."

Houzz was launched in February 2009. From its inception, the site made a big impression. The industry-changing site's audience continues to grow.

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HOME PAGE: Explore Houzz from the Home Page using its three main top navigation channels. Home Design Ideas takes you directly to the Garage and Shed section.





PROFESSIONAL PROFILE:

Every door installer should create a free Professional Profile that will enable homeowners to find you easily.

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If you are unfamiliar with Houzz, you might find it overwhelming at first due to the vast scope of products, pictures, information, contacts, and project ideas the site offers. No worries: it is highly user-friendly, photography-driven, and easy to navigate.

Endless benefits for dealers and manufacturers

Door manufacturers and installing dealers have a lot to gain by utilizing the site. You can build a free, searchable presence in the website's database, which is sorted by category. You can also build a larger branded presence via advertising. Or better yet, you can do both.

There are several options available, and they are all designed to increase your visibility. You can add free content, such as project photos, or pay for additional exposure through advertising and other options.

Once your profile is established, when Houzz visitors click on the Find Professionals link, and they will see your company listed under the Home Improvement and Garage Door Sales categories.

All the listings are geo-targeted, but Houzz offers searchable subcategories such as Custom Garage Doors, Garage Door Installation, Garage Door Repair, and Garage Door Sales. The listing results pop up with multiple choices, and each one provides basic

You should only upload high-quality photos because these images will be compared to photos supplied by home designers, architects, and builders. Don't expect to dominate the category or show up in the top results. The good news is that Houzz displays the content geographically, so you are typically competing for local exposure.

Houzz also gives viewers multiple filtering options to find the style, size, color, type, specialty, budget, and even the number of cars per garage they are looking for. And the options are sorted daily by popularity.

Free marketing resources

An online magazine is available to share with your in-house marketing team or advertising/PR agency. The magazine contains interesting case histories and how-to guides.

The Garages section of the magazine includes pertinent stories, such as "How to replace or revamp your garage doors," "How to make your garage a storage powerhouse," "More living space: converting a garage," and "Planned garage evolves into a multifunctional modern barn."

Another way to stand out is to accumulate reviews on the Houzz site. There is a Review Professionals link listed under Get Help, where you can direct customers who may want to put in a good word for you. You can also send them a direct link to the review section.

MONITORING THE GARAGE DISCUSSIONS AND OFFERING HELPFUL ADVICE COULD LEAD TO GOODWILL BUILDING AND WORD OF MOUTH SALES OPPORTUNITIES.

The latest sector of Houzz is ecommerce, which offers even more opportunities for businesses in the door industry.

Houzz is well organized and offers three main navigation choices for current or soon-to-be homeowners: Get Ideas, Find Professionals, or Shop by Department. The quick tour guides users on how to begin making the most of Houzz.

Add your company today!

The Find Professionals page is where you want to be, and Houzz makes it easy to add your company as a searchable business on the website. Simply go to the home page and access the For Professionals link at the bottom of the page.

This link will take you to the Homeowners Are Looking for You on Houzz page, where you can follow steps to create your free Professional Profile.

contact information. A secondary link takes you to a Professional Profile detail page where additional information about your business is displayed.

Get Ideas

The Get Ideas section of Houzz includes a repository of Pinterest-style photos offering design ideas for various parts of the home, including the garage (see Garage and Shed category).

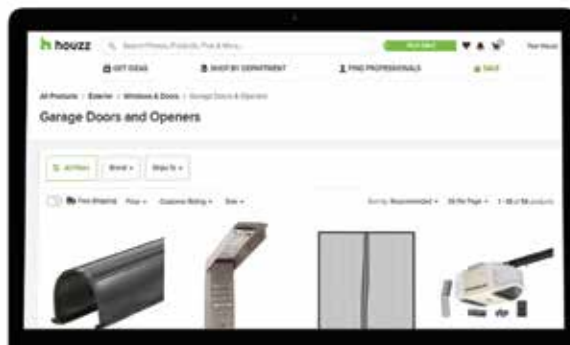
Use Houzz platforms to grow sales

Houzz has even more ideas on the Discussions Board. The board is sorted by various topics, including garage topics. Here, users can post questions or discussion items and others can respond. Monitoring the garage discussions and offering helpful advice could lead to goodwill building and word-of-mouth sales opportunities.

And it wouldn't be a 2019 website without video: Houzz has its own branded TV channel. Unlike YouTube, you cannot create or post original video content. To be featured on Houzz, you need to inspire them with one of your installations or project photos. If you do, they might ask you to appear in a video segment.

SHOP BY DEPARTMENT:

It pays to set up a storefront on Houzz so homeowners can purchase products from you online. If you aren't doing e-commerce on your website already, Houzz is a good way to get your feet wet.



The Houzz research section contains statistical data and trend information from a wide range of home construction and renovation-related resources. It is designed for homeowners, but manufacturers and installers can use the latest numbers to determine construction plans.

They also have a celebrity My Houzz section that showcases home makeovers and special rooms in stars' own residences.

Build your dream Houzz

E-commerce is usually resisted by small businesses like garage door installers because it requires them to rethink how they normally do business. Adding merchant account capability, investing in a company website, or perhaps joining an ancillary site like Houzz with a digital storefront are all quality options to consider.

Deciding whether it makes sense for you to be part of Houzz requires putting on a different hat—one worn by existing customers and potential new prospects.

If this site makes it easier for customers to find you and buy from you, it could be worth the time and investment. You might discover sales opportunities you never knew were there. Or you might build loyalty by simplifying the buying process for some of your customers.

Shop by Department

In any event, Houzz allows its site users to shop for all kinds of home-related products. If you drill down under Shop by Department and select Building Materials or Windows and Doors, you'll find Garage Doors & Openers. You'll already recognize some of the listed manufacturers as well as some installing dealers, DIY suppliers, etc.

Houzz makes it easy and enticing for homeowners to shop on the site by sharing inventory updates ("Only 6 Left"), price reductions, daily sales, customer ratings, and more.

Houzzhold name

Houzz may not be on the level of Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter; however, it has a huge following of design and home-conscious consumers. But Houzz doesn't rest on those laurels. Instead, it regularly uses email marketing campaigns to promote the latest offerings to its users.

In its own way, Houzz has created a Google-like model for homeowners and renovators because it offers endless options and possibilities within the home decorating and remodeling niche. And since no Houzz is complete without a well-equipped and outfitted

garage and maximum curb appeal, it's time to build your own presence on the site.

What are you waiting for? ■

Dan Ditzler is a metro Philadelphia-based business-to-business advertising and PR expert with a long history in this industry, representing manufacturers of garage doors, door operators, gate operators, access control systems, radio controls, and related residential building products.

Editor's note: Are you on Houzz? Email editor vicki@vjonesmedia.com and let us know how it has affected your business operations or sales.



DISCUSSIONS: You can build considerable goodwill and a reputation as a problem solver by participating in the Discussion Board.



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