

Contracting Business Success

Stop Chasing Virality: The Socal Media Strategy HVAC Contractors Actually Need

Likes and followers create visibility, but trust and consistency are what actually drive HVAC service calls. Crystal Williams explains how HVAC contractors can stay top-of-mind without flashy posts or big budgets.

Nicole Krawcke

Key Highlights

- Social media should be seen as a trust-building tool, not an instant lead generator, requiring patience and consistency.
- Building brand familiarity involves sharing relatable content, community involvement, and maintaining visual consistency.
- Strong, aligned messaging across all channels signals stability and credibility, fostering homeowner trust.

Many HVAC contractors invest time in social media only to wonder why likes and followers aren't translating into jobs. According to Crystal Williams, co-founder of Lemon Seed Marketing, the problem isn't the platform — it's the expectation. In this Q&A, Williams breaks down why social media should be viewed first as a trust-building and brand familiarity tool, not an instant lead generator. She explains how consistency, clear messaging, and alignment across marketing channels help contractors stay top-of-mind with homeowners — and why showing up reliably matters far more than going viral.

Stop Chasing Virality: The Social Media Strategy HVAC Contractors Actually Need

CB: Many contractors feel frustrated that social media isn't generating leads. What do you see as the most common misconceptions trades contractors have about "success" online?



Crystal Williams, co-founder of Lemon Seed Marketing

CW: One of the biggest misconceptions is that social media is supposed to act like a magic lead machine—that if you post often enough, jobs will start rolling in. However, for most contracting businesses, social media is primarily a brand-building tool, and a sales tool second. Contractors often expect direct leads from the very first post, instead of understanding that homeowners need repeated exposure and trust before they'll call. Another misconception is the idea that success is about looking "viral" instead of being consistent, professional, and reliable. In the trades, familiarity beats flashy every time.

CB: Why do likes, shares, and follower counts rarely translate into actual jobs in the trades?

CW: Because engagement metrics measure attention, not intent, a homeowner can like a funny post without ever needing a new roof. Someone can follow you today but not need a plumber for 18 months. In the trades, jobs occur when a homeowner has a problem and remembers your brand first. And then they already trust you enough to call. Likes and followers may help increase visibility, but they don't automatically equal built-in trust or timing.

CB: What does a "consistent online presence" look like for a small or mid-sized contracting business?

CW: Consistency isn't about posting every day; it's about predictability and alignment. A consistent presence looks like:

- Posting 2-4 times per week;
- Keeping your brand colors, tone, and messaging unified;
- Showing real work, real people, and real community;
- Maintaining an updated website;
- Responding to messages and comments in a timely way; and
- Keeping business hours, services, and contact info accurate everywhere.

Consistency builds ownership of your market, even if your volume of content is simple.

CB: How can contractors build brand familiarity in their local market without relying on flashy or viral content?

CW: Contractors can build brand familiarity through repetition and relatability, rather than relying on theatrics. Contractors can show up in their local market by:

- Sharing quick project spotlights;
- Posting "meet the team" content;
- Highlighting community involvement;
- Showing the behind-the-scenes job process;
- Posting simple homeowner tips; and
- Using the same logo, colors, and messaging everywhere.

Most homeowners don't need entertainment; they need to know who you are and what you do. Showing up consistently the same way is far more powerful than going viral once.

CB: How important is it for contractors to have a clear and consistent brand message across social media, website, and other marketing channels?

CW: It's essential. In the trades, consistency equals trust. When a homeowner sees the same message on your trucks, social media, website, and yard signs, it signals stability and credibility. If your online presence feels disjointed, featuring different colors, tones, and promises, it creates confusion. And confused customers don't buy.

CB: What are some low-cost, high-impact strategies contractors can use to stay top-of-mind with homeowners?

CW: These strategies require more intentionality than budget—and they compound over time.

- Regular social posts (even simple ones);
- Monthly or quarterly email newsletters;
- Google Business Profile updates;
- Requesting and replying to reviews;
- Yard signs with consistent branding;

Stop Chasing Virality: The Social Media Strategy HVAC Contractors Actually Need

- Community involvement photos; and
- Short educational videos filmed on a phone.

CB: How should contractors prioritize their marketing efforts between social media, email, online reviews, and other channels?

CW: Think of it like a marketing pyramid:

- **Foundation:** Google reviews, website, and branding. If these aren't strong, nothing else will work;
- **Middle layer:** Email marketing and social media. These build relationships and keep your business memorable; and
- **Top Layer:** Paid ads, seasonal promotions, and direct mail. These bring in leads once the brand is already trusted

Contractors shouldn't treat every channel equally; build the foundation, then layer intentionally.

CB: Are there simple metrics contractors can track to know if their online efforts are actually driving business, beyond likes and followers?

CW: Instead of tracking likes and follows, contractors should look at website traffic trends, click to call actions, form submissions, Google Business Profile Insights, and direct feedback: "How did you hear about us?"

These metrics directly connect to homeowner interest, not just visibility.

CB: What types of messaging most effectively convey reliability and trustworthiness to homeowners?

CW: Homeowners want contractors who are: on time, reasonably priced, skilled, safe, and easy to communicate with. Messaging that reinforces this sounds like: "Family owned and locally trusted since 1990," "We show up when we say we will," "Clear pricing and transparent communication." The tone should be confident, not salesy; clear, not clever.

CB: How can contractors balance showing personality on social media and projecting professionalism and expertise?

CW: Show personality through team spotlights, community events, and light-hearted behind-the-scenes moments, but maintain professionalism through clean branding, proper grammar, a respectful tone, high-quality photos, and avoiding controversial or polarizing topics.

CB: Are there common mistakes in messaging that erode trust, even if a company has a strong online presence?

CW: Yes, common ones include inconsistent service descriptions, overpromising or vague guarantees, poorly written or unprofessional captions, ignoring negative reviews, posting only sales pitches, showing messy job sites without context, and using mismatched branding across platforms.

Trust is fragile. Even minor inconsistencies can erode credibility.

CB: What advice would you give contractors who feel overwhelmed by the idea of "doing social media right?"

CW: Start simple, stay consistent, and think long term. You don't need to be trendy or viral. You don't need a professional camera. You don't need a hundred ideas.

Focus on three things:

1. Show up regularly;
2. Stay on brand; and
3. Be clear about what you do and who you serve.

Social media is just one piece of the brand puzzle, not the whole picture. It should support your business, not control it.

Nicole Krawcke is the Editor-in-Chief of Contracting Business *magazine. With over 10 years of B2B media experience across HVAC, plumbing, and mechanical markets, she has expertise in content creation, digital strategies, and project management. Nicole has more than 15 years of writing and editing experience and holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism from Michigan State University.*