

While Others Are Building Walls, You Could Be Building Geofences

Targeted marketing with a proven return on investment. That should really get your attention because much of the traditional marketing you might be doing, like the yellow pages, billboards, TV and radio tell you the number of impressions you might get. And, most of the people who see your marketing outreach don't happen to need your services right now. Even with the large number of impressions you might get from these traditional marketing avenues, how many of those impressions actually bring you cars to fix that you can attribute to that particular radio spot, or billboard, etc.? If you ask people how they heard of you, or why they brought their car to you, many may not recall the actual reason, or reasons, they came to you. It could be a combination of things that helped build your brand recognition for them, so much so that they trust you with their car. Are there better options?

There is a way to specifically reach those who actually need your services... *NOW*. Imagine if you could build a virtual electronic fence around a certain, specifically targeted area that actually hits the electronic devices of those who are in need of your auto body repair services *TODAY*. How about serving them with an ad promoting your company? Welcome to the world of geofencing.

Geofencing gets your ads in front of prospective customers in the middle of their decision-making process as to where to have their vehicle repaired. How? By placing digital fences around competitor body shops, tow yards, dealerships, including those selling makes you are certified for, insurance agent offices and more. When someone enters into an area that is geofenced, your ads will show on their phone, tablet or computer at some point in the very near future, usually minutes or within an hour or two later when they go online with their devices. How do these virtual fences know when a person has entered into their area? Data location services.

Data location services run around the clock on digital devices. You gave permission for these location services to operate. Remember that? This makes your life easier. This is how GPS systems work. This is how your weather app knows where you are in order to give you an accurate picture of your weather. Your location is identified from either cellular, wifi, GPS networks or Bluetooth connections. These location services operate in the open air where the physical boundaries of your shop don't apply, so others can freely market to people who have been on your property, even while they are sitting in your waiting room, and this is where it gets very interesting.

A person is in your lobby waiting for an estimate. They pull out their phone and start looking at Facebook, searching Google for that new toy they are interested in, whatever, and suddenly an ad comes up for a competitor's shop, and this shop just happens to be certified for their particular make, and you aren't. Suddenly this person has options, takes your estimate with them and heads for the other shop to see what they can do for them. This is the essence of how geofencing can work for a body shop. But wait, there's more.

Like most in this industry, you may be challenged by a shortage of skilled workers. How about a unique hiring tool? With geofencing, you could put a virtual fence around your competitor's shop and target

their employees with help wanted ads, showcasing your working conditions, equipment, benefits, signing bonuses, etc. Put geofences around tech schools, too, to promote your opportunities and serve up ads to young people in training, highlighting why they would want to work for you instead of somewhere else. You can promote your shop around insurance agent offices, too.

A company that provides geofencing services specifically for the collision repair industry is 3P Marketing (<http://3pmarketingsolutions.com>). I wanted to check them out. I spoke with their co-founder and Digital Strategist Megan Williams. Megan told me, "The ability to maximize a marketing budget by only showing your ads to those searching for collision repair, in real-time, is a complete game changer." The analytics showed the number of impressions their client's ads received, how many clicks those ads generated and then how many people actually took action. The service isn't cheap, but based on the actual jobs received I see a strong return on investment in terms of actual cars to fix. From what I have seen I can certainly recommend you give geofencing strong consideration.