

From Chaos to Credibility:

How to Build a Client-Closing Magazine for Your Business

(The ultimate guide to creating a powerful, trust-building magazine to help your company stand out, connect with clients, and close more jobs.)



INTRODUCTION

Imagine this:

A homeowner schedules three estimates with three different contractors.

All three contractors are professional, on time, and friendly. They are all pretty similar in price, maybe one is a bit more expensive than the others.

But that one sends a beautifully printed magazine before the appointment — filled with photos, testimonials, and stories that make the company feel like a trusted friend.

Who do you think gets the job?

That's the power of a branded magazine.

This guide walks you through how to create your own — a trust-building, client-winning tool that helps you stand out in a crowded market. You don't need to be a designer or marketer; you just need your story, your photos, and a clear plan.

Inside these pages, you'll learn:

- What to include in your magazine and how to organize it
- How to write content that connects
- The best platforms for designing and printing (no fancy software needed)
- Smart ways to use your finished magazine to close more jobs automatically



Pro Tip: Your magazine isn't just a brochure — it's your reputation in print. Treat it like your company's handshake.

WHY YOUR COMPANY NEEDS A SALES MAGAZINE

When it comes to earning trust, presentation matters. Most homeowners don't know how to compare contractors— so they go with the one who *feels* the most professional and credible. They go with the one who they trust the most, and the one who they feel will give them the most bang for their buck. Maybe you cost more than the other guy. Give them a good reason why it will benefit them more and you have upped the chance of landing the contract.

A custom magazine accomplishes three things:

1. It builds trust before you ever step inside their home.
2. It showcases your quality visually.
3. It educates clients on what makes you different from other contractors.

When homeowners can flip through photos, learn your process, and read real reviews, they start thinking, “These are the pros.” You’ve elevated your brand instantly.



Quick Fact: 70–80% of people make buying decisions based on trust and presentation — not price.

A magazine helps potential clients see your professionalism and attention to detail. It shifts the conversation away from being the cheapest bid, and toward being the trusted expert.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Pro Tip: Don't underestimate the emotional element.



Homeowners want to feel confident, not sold to.

Focus on peace of mind, not price tags.

Cover and Tagline

Your cover should be clean and professional.

- Include a full-page photo of one of your most beautiful projects or you or your crew in action. You can also find a good stock photo online (see the links section at the end of this guide)
- Include your business name, logo and tagline.
- Include what they can expect to see inside of the magazine (a small table of contents) such as:
 - License and Insurance Info
 - Before and after photos
 - Guarantees
 - About Us
 - Our Process

Who We Are

This can be done in two or three sections.

1. **About *Your Business Name*:** *This is where you would talk about your business, what are the company values, do you have a mission statement? What do you promise your clients? How about a short, personal story about how your business started?*
2. **About Our Employees:** *This is where you talk about your employees. What sets them apart? You can highlight some of your employees here if you choose. Include pictures of your team.*
3. **About You:** *Who are you? What do you like to do in your spare time? What are your personal values? Why do you love this business you've created? Are you married, do you have children? Include pictures of yourself and your family*

Keep it human — homeowners will be more likely to choose you if they see you and your employees as human beings, not a faceless business.

<i>License and Insurance Info</i>	This section builds instant credibility. Include proof of: • your certifications • license numbers • insurance coverage Add a short paragraph explaining why these should matter to the homeowner. (What happens if my contractor isn't insured? etc)
<i>Processes and Checklist</i>	Show them exactly how you ensure a quality result, every time. — What are your preparation steps, — how do you ensure that the floors are protected, the furniture, the flower beds? — What is your end of day process? How do you ensure the house is properly cleaned up at the end of the day, etc. This proves your professionalism and reduces client anxiety.
<i>Project Photos and Before and After Photos</i>	Homeowners love transformations. Show multiple types of projects based on the services you offer. — interiors, exteriors, cabinets, doors, floors, etc. Talk about what you did on specific projects if applicable. If you have great online reviews, add a QR code for people to scan that will take them to your google reviews.
<i>Warranties and Guarantees</i>	Reassure them with your quality guarantee. Be specific — e.g., “Up to 10-year workmanship warranty.”
<i>Services Overview</i>	List your main service you offer for your trade-- keep it concise and benefit-driven. Include some pictures for each service you offer (or products)
<i>What to Expect</i>	Talk about what they can expect to happen at the consultation as well as after the consultation. What are the next steps once they accept your proposal?

Contact Information	What is your company's contact information? What is your policy when it comes to communications? When can they expect to hear back from you after they call you or e-mail you? What are your business hours?
Articles!	This is where you will shine above your competitors. Include short, one- or two-page articles. This does not have to be scary, get creative with it. Maybe it's about the hottest color this fall, or why a good prep job is imperative, or a nightmare job one of your clients had with a contractor before they hired you.



Pro Tip: I know this can feel like a lot. I won't lie, it takes a lot of elbow grease at the computer. But trust me when I say it is so worth it.

Don't want to spend the hours it would take to create this yourself? I got you! [Click Here](#) to find out more.

Otherwise, read on and we'll get into the nitty gritty details

DESIGNING YOUR MAGAZINE

You don't need expensive software or a graphic designer to build something professional.

Use Canva

-Visit [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com). You will have to sign up for an account, I recommend the monthly or yearly plan as it gives you a lot more options when it comes to designing.

Free Plan: \$0 — basic tools, limited templates and storage. [canva.com](https://www.canva.com)

Pro Plan (for individuals): ~ **US \$12.99/month** or ~ **US \$119.99/year** (which averages about US \$10/month when billed annually).

-Choose an 8.5 × 11-inch document, set to print-ready PDF. (It is a small learning curve, but doable.

Canva has hundreds of free magazine templates — or you can start from scratch using grids and frames for photos.

Tips for Layout:

- Alternate photo-heavy and text-light pages
- Keep margins clean; avoid crowding
- Use consistent fonts (two max)
- Stick with 2–3 brand colors for a cohesive, professional look

Suggested Page Flow:

1. Cover
2. Welcome or About Pages
3. Proof & Process
4. Testimonials
5. Pictures
6. Service Highlights
7. Final Contact Page



Pro Tip: Don't clutter! White space = professionalism.

Let your work and photos breathe. And make sure to include plenty of high-quality photos!

Don't have many? That's ok, as long as you're not claiming it as your work (for example, in a before or after area), you can use stock photos for now.

That said, it is worth investing in some quality photos that are your own work.

TOP FREE-LOW COST STOCK IMAGE SITES

✓ Top Free / Low-Cost Stock Image Sites

1. Pexels

- Great library of free photos & videos, with many usable for commercial use. [foleon.com+3Pexels+3Pexels+3](#)
- Very useful when you need high-quality imagery (e.g., feature spreads in your magazine).
- Tip: double-check the image license on each image (some may have model/property release limits).

2. Pixabay

- Large collection of royalty-free images, videos, etc. Free for commercial use, no attribution required in many cases. [Pixabay+2Pixabay+2](#)
- Good for getting a variety of images (business, renovation, textures) quickly.
- Note: “royalty-free” doesn’t always mean “no restrictions” — avoid using images with identifiable people for sensitive uses without checking releases.

3. Canva (Free Stock Photos Section)

- If you already use Canva for magazine design, they have an integrated free-stock photo library. [Canva](#)
- Advantage: seamless integration into your magazine/layout work.
- Be mindful: there’s a mix of free & “Pro” (paid) assets — ensure you’re using the free ones if budget matters.

4. Unsplash

- Known for high-quality aesthetic images; free for commercial use with their license. [unsplash.com](#)
- Might have fewer images tailored for very specific “service business / renovation” situations, but great for emotional or lifestyle imagery (which works well in magazines).
- Tip: When using in printed materials (magazines, brochures) check resolution (print needs higher DPI) and ensure you’re comfortable with the unsplash license (no trademark use, etc).

5. Freepik (Free Photos & Graphics)

- Offers free business-photos, vectors, PSD files etc. Useful if you also want graphic elements (icons, illustrations) not just photos. [Freepik+1](#)
- Free usage often requires attribution or checking the specific resource’s terms — good to read the details.

6. Adobe Stock Free Collection

- Free assets section of Adobe Stock: high-quality free photos, vectors, and videos, all cleared for commercial use. [Adobe Stock](#)
- While “free”, this is often fewer assets than paid stock libraries. But smart when you want high-end imagery and want fewer legal worries.

Usage Tips & Things to Watch

- **Resolution/Print-Quality:** Since you're creating a magazine (print or digital), make sure the images are high resolution (300 dpi if print) so they don't look pixelated.
- **Licensing & Rights:** Even "free" stock sites have rules. Some require attribution, some restrict commercial use, some don't allow use in "promoting illegal activity" or use of identifiable people for certain purposes. Always read the license of each image. (Many of the blogs about "free business stock photo sites" point this out. foleon.com)
- **Model & Property Releases:** Especially if the photo shows people, interiors, branded stuff — if the person or brand is identifiable you'll want to ensure you have the right release for commercial use (magazine/mailing) or choose images where that is cleared.
- **Branding / Consistency:** Don't rely only on generic "stock-looking" photos — pick ones that feel authentic, relevant to the services you offer.
- **Mix Free + Low-Cost Premium:** If you hit a wall with the free libraries (maybe you need a very specific scene: painter on ladder in mid-renovation in a modern home, etc), it might be worth allocating a small budget for one premium image ~(e.g., via Adobe Stock paid, or other micro-stock). But many free libraries will cover a lot.
- **Attribution & Use in Mailings:** If you use the images in printed mailings (your magazine, brochures) consider whether the license requires attribution (e.g., "Photo by ...") and whether that fits your layout. Many sites above have "no attribution required for most uses" — which simplifies things.

WRITING CONTENT THAT CONNECTS

People love a good article, and your words matter. The right story builds trust while establishing you as the expert.

Tips

- Write in a conversational tone, while maintaining professionalism. Your goal is to establish yourself as the expert.
- Keep it Personal by making it about them. Avoid corporate-sounding phrases. Instead of “We pride ourselves on exceptional quality,” try: “We treat every project like it’s our own home — because it matters.”
- Warm, clear, and professional beats salesy every time. You’re not pitching — you’re showing them who you are and what you’re about. Sometimes it’s even more important to show them what you’re not about. (For example, in our painting business, we do not skimp on prep. If a job requires us to cut corners, we won’t do it.)
- Are you a terrible writer? Have AI help you. That said, you will still need to revise it yourself, AI is great but it doesn’t beat your knowledge and your personality.

Article Ideas

- Tell stories. Have you ever had an experience where you were the more expensive bid and a client went a different direction only to come back later and hire you? We sure have, multiple times. Write an article about that experience. Why did the customer choose to come back to you? (Of course if you do this, never use the other contractor’s name).
- What about the new hot color trends? Write about them, and make sure to put pictures of the colors.
- Got some techniques that make you stand up above the rest? Write about it.
- Do you have additional certifications? Tell why they are important for the homeowner.
- Is there a common problem homeowners face? What solution do you offer? Write about it.

Checklist:

- Does this sound like a real person wrote it?
- Does it make the homeowner feel confident and comfortable?
- Does it show gratitude or appreciation?
- Does it establish you as the obvious choice as a professional?

HOW TO USE YOUR MAGAZINE

You've done the hard part!

Now it's time to make your magazine *work* for you. This isn't just a showpiece; it's a silent salesperson that builds trust before you ever arrive at the estimate. How you use your magazine is up to you. You can keep it digital if you'd like and just send people a link to your magazine. I have to tell you from our experience; it is worth it to give prospects a printed copy. There is something about holding a tangible piece of material in their hands that solidifies you as a professional. As of this writing, depending on how many magazines we order from the printer at a time, our price for a printed magazine of 32 pages, ends up costing around \$5.10 per magazine. (This assumes bulk orders of 50 at a time and includes the shipping cost to our business. The price point per magazine goes down the more you order at once).

1. Mail It Before the Estimate

This is my favorite way of using the magazine, especially for people who aren't referrals and don't know us from the next guy (or gal). It warms up those cold leads ahead of time so that they already want YOU more than the other unknown contractor.

Put it in a large yellow envelope and send it out ahead of time along with a reminder of the day and time of the estimate and a short note saying you're excited to meet with them. Obviously for this to work, you would need to have estimates booking out no less than 3 days from the current day to give it time to arrive in their mailbox.

Be sure to Include a short, handwritten note:

"Thanks for scheduling your estimate! (list the name of the person who will be doing the estimate) is excited to meet with you on (list the date and time). This magazine will show you a little about who we are and how we work. See you soon!"

That single act sets the tone: professional, prepared, and trustworthy.

2. Bring It to the Estimate

Listen, sometimes life gets busy and you can't send it ahead of time. In this case, bring it with you and hand it to them. "Just a little something that gives you an idea of our company and what we offer."

3. Keep a stack in your car

Here's the thing. You never know who you're going to run into. Even though our magazine is tailored to our residential clients, we have handed them to potential home builder connections as well. Even if they are happy with their current painters, they are always impressed by our professionalism and do remember (and call us!) the next time they need a painter.

4. Partner with Other Professionals

And on that note, give copies to realtors, designers, and local remodelers who work with the same homeowners you do. Send them out in the mail along with a short letter of introduction and what you can offer them. Of course you would tailor that letter to what's in it for them.

5. Add a Digital Version

Don't want to or can't yet spend money on print? Upload your magazine to your website and send people a link to it as soon as they sign up for an estimate.

You can also link it in email signatures or text estimates ("View our company magazine here").



Pro Tip: Think of the price of a printed magazine as a part of your marketing budget. What is \$5-\$6 per prospect worth to you if means you win the sale more often and at a higher price point?

NEXT STEPS

Option 1: Get to work!

1. Get out a pen and paper and map out all of the things you need to gather.
2. Make a file on your computer, label it Magazine and take and include pictures of all of your certificates and photos you want to include in the magazine.
3. Write at least one article and polish it up. Save it in this file.
4. Gather all of your reviews and put them in their own document. Save it.
5. Go on Canva, sign up for an account if you haven't already, and learn it (basic directions are in the next section).
6. Design your magazine layout and start plugging in the work you saved in earlier steps.
7. Turn your design into a pdf document and send off to the printers.
8. Create a digital link and add it to your website.

Option 2: The Customizable Template

💡 *The faster way to create your magazine without starting from scratch, but still on a budget.*
Get instant access to a pre-built 32 page Canva template made specifically for contractors.

It includes:

- All core pages (About, Process, Reviews, Services, etc.)
- Ready-to-edit layouts and headlines
- Pre-paid Stock Images

Plug in your photos, text, logo and certificates — and your magazine is ready.

It's still DIY, but simplified — and considering the 40 + hours it took to build this structure, it's an absolute steal.

👉 [Click here to for more information.](#)

Option 2: Done-For-You Custom Magazine

 *Our most popular option — we handle everything for you.*

If you'd rather skip the design work entirely, our team can build your custom magazine from start to finish.

1. Place your order
2. Fill out a quick questionnaire about your business.
3. Upload your photos to Dropbox (or we can help you choose stock).
4. We write, design, and format your magazine — fully customized.

Approximately two weeks after we receive your information, you'll have a stunning, print-ready magazine that looks like it took months to build — because we've already done the hard part for you!

Because it takes a lot more effort on our part, this offer is limited to a first come first serve basis, so you'll want to sign up sooner than later. Also, we limit this option to one trade type per county.

 [Click here to for more information.](#)

BASIC CANVA INSTRUCTIONS



Pro Tip: Canva has assorted how to videos on their website, I highly recommend you check out the following beginners guide:

[A beginner's guide to using Canva](#)

Step 1: Start Your Project

1. Go to [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) and log in or sign up.
2. Click “**Create a design**” → “**Magazine**” (or set a custom size, such as 8.5" × 11").
3. Choose between **Portrait** or **Landscape** format — most magazines use **Portrait**.

Step 2: Choose a Template (or Start Blank)

- In the left sidebar, under “**Designs**” click “**Templates.**”
- Type “**Magazine**” in the search bar.
- Choose a layout that matches your vision — you can **customize every element** later.
- You can also click “**Add page**” at the bottom to build it from scratch. **The first page is your front cover, the last page is your back cover.**

IMPORTANT!

If you plan to print your magazine, you will need to have a total page count in the following increments. 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, etc. (For example, you won't be able to print 9 or 10 pages without having some empty pages. Must increase by 4).

Step 3: Add Text Boxes

- In the left panel, click “Text.”
- Choose a Heading, Subheading, or Body Text.
- To edit:
 - Click inside the box and type.
 - Use the top toolbar to change font, color, size, alignment, or spacing.
 - To duplicate, right-click → Duplicate.
 - To move, click and drag.
 - Use consistent fonts for professional results — for example:
 - **Headings:** bold serif or sans-serif (like Playfair Display or Montserrat)
 - **Body text:** clean and easy to read (like Canva Sans or Lato)

Step 4: Add Design Elements

1. Click “**Elements**” on the left sidebar.
2. Search for shapes, lines, icons, or illustrations (e.g., “paint splash,” “line divider,” “arrow”).
3. Click an element to add it to your page.
4. Adjust **size, color, and transparency** using the top toolbar.

Step 5: Add Photos

1. To upload your own:
 - Click “**Uploads**” → “**Upload files**”, then choose images from your computer.
 - Drag and drop uploaded photos into your design.
2. To use Canva stock images:
 - Click “**Photos**”, then search (e.g., “construction,” “interior design,” “tools”).
3. To crop or edit:
 - Double-click the image to reposition or resize inside its frame.
 - Use the top toolbar for filters, brightness, contrast, and saturation.
4. To create consistency, use **one or two color tones** throughout your magazine (e.g., warm, neutral, or cool tones).

Step 6: How to Use the Position Tool

Select the Element

- Click on any **text box, photo, or design element** on your page.
- When it’s selected, a toolbar will appear along the top of your Canva workspace.

Find the “Position” Button

- Look at the **top toolbar** — it’s usually in the **upper right area**, next to the “Edit,” “Animate,” or “Transparency” icons.
- The button is labeled “**Position**” and looks like a small icon with rectangles stacked or arrows pointing in different directions. *(If you don’t see it, make sure you’ve selected an element — it only shows up when something is highlighted.)*

Align Objects on the Page: Once you click “**Position**,” you’ll see several options:

- **Top / Middle / Bottom** – Align elements vertically on the page.
- **Left / Center / Right** – Align elements horizontally.
- If you have multiple elements selected, it will align them **relative to each other** (not the page).

👉 **Example:**

If you select three text boxes and click “Position → Center,” Canva will line them up perfectly in the middle.

Layering (Forward / Backward): Below the alignment options, you’ll see “Layer” controls such as:

- **Forward** → Brings the element one layer above others.
- **Backward** → Sends it one layer behind.
- **To Front / To Back** → Moves the element all the way forward or back.

👉 **Example:**

If a background photo covers your text, click the photo → **Position** → **Send backward** until your text appears on top.

Tidy Up with “Arrange” and “Spacing”: When multiple elements are selected:

- **Tidy up** → Automatically spaces them evenly.
- **Space evenly (Horizontally / Vertically)** → Makes sure gaps between items are uniform.

👉 **Example:**

You can select a row of logos or icons and use “Tidy up” to make them look perfectly balanced.

Use Shortcut Tips (Optional)

- **Ctrl/Cmd + [or]** → Move an element backward or forward one layer.
- **Shift + Arrow keys** → Nudge elements quickly.
- **Shift + Click** → Select multiple objects at once to align together.

Step 7: Add QR Codes

- Click “Apps” (bottom of the left sidebar).
- Scroll or search for “QR Code.”
- Click the app → paste your URL (like your Google Reviews link or your company website).
- Click “Generate QR Code.”
- Drag and resize it anywhere on your page – for example:
- On the back cover for reviews
- Next to testimonials for “See this project online”
- On a contact page for direct calls or estimates

Step 8: Organize & Polish

- Use the “**Grid View**” (bottom right corner) to see all pages at once.
- Rearrange pages by dragging.
- Make sure each page has:
 - **Consistent margins**
 - **Balanced text-to-image ratio**
 - **Readable font sizes**
- Use **guides and rulers** (View → Show rulers and guides) for alignment.

Step 9: Download or Share

- Click the “**Share**” button in the top-right corner.
- Choose:
 - **PDF Print** → for high-quality printing
 - **PDF Standard** → for emailing or uploading
 - **Link** → to share the digital version
- For printed copies, you can also use **Canva Print** or download and send to your preferred printer. (We use [Printing Center UAS](#).) Print size: [A4 (8.27 x 11.69) (8.27 x 11.69 Inch)].