



STARTING A PARTY RENTAL BUSINESS

Customized for inflatable and special event
rental businesses



FORWARD

I've been in the party rental business since 2004. I got into the business like many probably do. I jumped in head first without much thought, thinking it would be a simple way to make a lot of money, and I was wrong. There was far more to it than delivering some fun equipment to a house and collecting money. Over the years, I have learned many things trying to recover from that innocent ignorance. Writing [InflatableOffice rental software](#) was one of the things I did to help myself overcome the challenges of owning a party rental business. In fact, it was the best thing I ever did for my company, and I think the companies across the world that are using it would agree.

This guide is going to cover as many facets of the party rental business as possible so that you are ready to go from the start. There is a lot in here, so don't feel like you have to know it all and put it all into practice the first day. There are some things that you may already have handled and you can skip over. Use it as a guide and take it step by step. There will be some things that will stand out as more important to do now and others that can wait. I also want to say that I'm not THE expert. There are other people out there that have run larger businesses and learned more or at least different things than me. Feel free to test my thoughts against others and choose them over me. No business is exactly the same, and my take on things may not work in your situation. The goal is to get you thinking about the important things.

So let's get started!

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STARTING A BUSINESS

WAY TO GO! NOW WHAT HAPPENS?

There are many ways people form their business, and sometimes state laws will make some types better than others. The reason to form a business entity is generally so you can reduce your personal liability and possibly reduce your taxes.

Below is a list of some of the more common entity types –

SOLE PROPRIETER

Single Owner

(Single Owner) - Most people do it this way. It's probably the easiest way to do it.

LLC OR LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Single or Multiple Owners

Probably the best option of the group. It's not hard, especially for a single member, to set it up. It also provides good personal liability protection. As you grow, it will make sense to take an S-Corp election to reduce your taxes.

PARTNERSHIP

Multiple Owners

This is most like a sole proprietorship but with more than one person. It's potentially more simple to set up but doesn't provide as much liability protection as an LLC.

CORPORATION

Single or Multiple Owners

C corps are what big companies use, but the benefits are really not there for the small companies. If you are thinking of doing an S-Corp, it is really easy to start as an LLC and then take the S-Corp election when it makes sense.



“I jumped in head first without much thought, thinking it would be a simple way to make a lot of money, and I was wrong.”



Obviously you should consult your accountant and a lawyer when making this decision, but the above should give you an idea of what you might want to do. Forming an LLC is generally rather easy and inexpensive. If you will have partners though, you really need to have a lawyer help you build an Operating Agreement so everything is very clear governing the business and your relationships. They are good for single member LLCs too, but not really as critical. You'll file your business entity formation with your state. You can file in other states if you want. It's more expensive and probably more work, but some states have very favorable laws and it also forces anyone trying to come after your business to go to that state to do it. So, it makes it harder and less likely they will mess with it.

Since you will be selling services in a state, you will need a vendor's license in your state. This is usually easy to get and not too expensive. This is the account you use when you report your sales so that you can collect sales tax from customers and submit it to your state.

It's usually a good idea to get an FEIN (Federal Employer Identification Number), even if you are not planning on having employees for a while. This will allow you to use this number to identify your business instead of using your Social Security number. It's super easy to get this [by going online to the IRS site](#). Usually you will get it immediately on screen. If you will have employees,

you must do this. submitted and tried to justify that direction for my business once, that it's not legal to set up workers as independent contractors. The IRS and other places have [information about this online](#). It's my belief and also the IRS' at least for my company that your workers will be considered employees by the IRS.

NOW HIRING!

Once you get into employees, you will have to consider the following taxes and paperwork:

- Withholding for the Federal, State, and Localities
- Unemployment for the State
- Worker's Compensation for the State
- New Hire Reporting and Wage Garnishments for the State
- Possibly more in your area...

Should you pay yourself as an employee?



Generally, I would not do this unless you are a S Corp or you have started paying other employees under an LLC. There are 2 benefits in my mind for paying yourself as an employee.

You can pay taxes as you earn income so it's not a shock at the end of the year and you don't have to pay estimated taxes quarterly.

You are making enough that an S-Corp election will save you taxes because you can pay yourself a reasonable income and have the rest flow through to you at a lower tax rate.

When it comes to managing employees, [InflatableOffice](#) has you covered more than any other rental software.

We provide self-scheduling, normal scheduling, an entire site for workers to see their schedule and access important information about events dependent on their permissions, payroll tracking and reporting, email/text reminders, sales rep commission tracking, and much, much more.

Visit our [workers module page](#) to learn more about what we offer and talk to our sales reps to get a free trial.



INSURANCE

KEY FACTS ABOUT US

A lot of people do not do this early enough in the starting of their business. I remember being really annoyed about insurance when I started. I saw it as a big waste of money. My goal was to spend as little as possible, and I never paid attention to what my insurance was actually covering. Please, do not think like this. I never suffered because of my poor view of insurance, but I really could have. Insurance is one of the most important things you will purchase for your business. You can lose everything if something goes wrong and you do not have insurance. In many cases, I think you can even become personally liable regardless of your business structure because not having insurance is seen as gross negligence. All that to say that insurance is important.

Now let's talk a bit about the practical side of insurance.

Here are some of my tips.

COVERAGE

Make sure you understand what they cover. Don't just buy it to check it off the list. Shop around and compare coverage (as well as the rest of the points I'll bring up). Insurance does you no good if it excludes the most likely things to happen to you. It's also vitally important that you understand any rules that apply to you if you want to be eligible for any coverage you are purchasing with your insurance. Remember, insurance companies make money by not paying out. Their policies will cover as little as possible and the things they do cover will have rules you have to follow to actually be able to redeem the coverage. For instance, most insurance policies will require that you follow all the manufacturer guidelines, and if you don't, they will deny coverage. What if your manual for the equipment says 2 people max and you think it's ok to put a 3rd person on because it's just little Johnnie? If Johnnie gets hurt, there's a good chance you will not be covered.

AUDITS

Unfortunately insurance is generally priced based on your sales and will require an audit at some point. I think they do this because they know the more you have, the more you can pay. It does help them determine their risk though too. The more money you make, the more people you are likely coming into contact with, the busier you are, and the more likely you might have an issue. Back to the audit, it's good to know how the audit will occur and what information you will have to provide. Are there penalties for estimating too low and that showing up later at the audit? Maybe some policies audit procedure is much more favorable to you. If you are a growing company, this could be a big deal.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

When you are comparing companies, you should consider some of the value added services some of these companies offer. If you will be doing events for organizations, you are often asked to list them as additional insured on your policy for that event. Some places charge extra for this. Coming up with a contract and other documentation can be difficult, and some companies will offer you guidance on this by giving you terms that they like to see in a contract or possibly an actual contract to use.



REPORTING

In addition to audits, some companies require or at least request you to report certain things like incidents that occur. Of course if there is an accident most will require a report. It's important to know the procedure and what documentation and information they require. This will help you train your employees and yourself to properly handle incidents and develop a report to gather the correct information. Additionally, knowing what is important to your insurance company will help you in making signs and notices for your equipment as well as your training procedures.

COMPANIES

This industry is considered a high risk industry and insurance companies are frequently turning over. Not every insurance company will write policies

for this industry. In fact, there aren't many that do. You will generally be working with an agent and your agent will be working with one of the few underwriters willing to write for this industry. So, if you approach multiple agents, be advised they may be going to the same underwriters. Make sure you are consistent with your information so they don't think you are trying to manipulate. When I started, I wasn't very consistent and one underwriter refused to quote me.

OTHER INSURANCE

We've only talked about liability, but you can also purchase insurance on equipment, your storage facility, and your commercial vehicles. There's no shortage of insurance decisions!

Below is a list of a couple insurance companies that at the time of writing this were still offering insurance. It's a good idea to ask around industry groups to get opinions on these companies and names of other companies. Please don't consider my listing of these companies as an endorsement. Additionally, not all companies can write policies in every state.

- [CIA](#)
- [ARA](#)
- [Zodiac](#)
- [Olivier VanDyk](#)
- [The Friedman Group](#)

[InflatableOffice software](#) works with CIA insurance to provide 10% off both the insurance and software when you are using both. I still recommend checking other providers, but CIA insurance has been kind enough to work with us to provide this added benefit to our users.





SAFETY & LIABILITY

A QUICK VIEW OF WHAT WE ARE DOING

Safety is another topic that many people, including myself, tend to ignore when starting their business. I know you have a lot of things on your plate right now, and you actually have to spend some time selling and delivering services so you can make your business worth doing. I want to encourage you though that safety is of utmost importance. People every year [die or are seriously injured](#) when using party rental equipment. You don't want to hurt someone, have that on your conscience, or lose your business and hurt your financial position. It is worth getting this right from the start.

There are a lot of areas where you will need to consider safety for your business, such as warehouse work, vehicle use, moving heavy equipment, and of course patron use of your equipment. This equipment is heavy. You will likely find yourselves moving a literal ton (2,000 lbs) of weight around to do an event. Due to your workers compensation policy you will want to put some safety practices in place to keep your employees safe and keep your claims down.

But I want to focus on the safety of your patrons.

Safety of your patrons is a topic that I could spend a couple days teaching you, and there are many places that do just that. I'm going to try to keep it brief, and encourage you to connect with some of the organizations I mention in this document to get more information. There is so much to cover, in order to stay brief, I'm going to make a bulleted list.

LAWS

Federal

The Consumer Product Safety Commission CPSC has relatively recently been issuing [bulletins about amusement safety regarding inflatables](#). While they don't really have any legal authority over your operation from my understanding, they are seen as an authority and often cited in court cases against operators.

State

The laws around inflatable and other amusement devices are generally at the state level, and every state is different. You can [connect with your state](#) and find out what laws you need to consider. States sometimes require inspections, itinerary submissions, licensing fees, maintenance logs, signs, and training. Some states use the [ASTM](#) standards as guidelines for their laws, and many manufacturers do the same for their designs and manuals. For \$75 you can purchase a print or electronic copy of the standards for amusement devices. It's not the easiest thing to read, but a worthwhile investment.

Local

Usually if there are local ordinances governing amusement device installations, the inspections are carried out by local fire officials. You will likely only run into these for large public events.

CONTRACTS

We briefly touched on contracts already. A good contract will additionally contain safety information in it that the customer is made aware of and signs, agreeing and affirming. Often equipment manufacturers will have safety requirements that you want to pass on to your operators and customers. For instance, something as simple as a dunk tank may require you cover or drain it to prevent accidental drowning when it isn't supervised. [InflatableOffice](#) enables you to easily add these extra guidelines for each item into your contracts if those items are listed on the contracts. It detects and inserts any additional guidelines that you've identified.



[InflatableOffice software](#) works with CIA insurance to provide 10% off both the insurance and software when you are using both. I still recommend checking other providers, but CIA insurance has been kind enough to work with us to provide this added benefit to our users.



TRAINING

Some states like Pennsylvania require you attend a multi day training session and pass an exam to be able to inspect your own installations and sign-off on them. Outside of the required training, there are a number of safety organizations that offer training for your own benefit. Sometimes these certificates will get you a discount on your insurance.

- [SCIOTO](#)
- [NAARSO](#)

DOCUMENTATION

When it comes to safety, being safe is good, but it never happened if you didn't document it. You can't just perform the actions. You must document it somehow so you can prove it later. If you are in a situation where it's your word against their word, you will wish you would have documented proof. Documentation can be a signed contract, a signed training document, pictures of your installation, signage, and inspection checklists.

[InflatableOffice](#) can help you organize and track compliance with these laws. We keep a maintenance log for you, allow you to build and properly filter and print out itinerary sheets. You can easily use our software to design your inspection checklists to be used during setup of your equipment. You can build digital contracts and accept digital or paper signatures and store all this information for later if needed. Additionally we give you the ability to email, text, or upload images and/or documents from the event while at the event or later in the office that can always be accessed no matter where you are.

We also offer a safety training course you, your employees, and customers can take based on the equipment they will be dealing with. We store this information to later aid in any potential insurance claim or legal matter. You can even develop and deploy your own employee training content and exams. If that isn't enough, we also have a partnership with [JumpTrain](#) to enable you to train your employees and customers using their professionally made training courses.

There is no other software like [InflatableOffice party rental software](#) when it comes to helping you put safety procedures into practice and easily document and maintain them. For instance, wind speed is a significant issue with inflatables. Most require 15mph or less wind and proper anchoring. While we would recommend spending the money on an [anemometer](#) to have at the event,

Wind Alerts is a standard feature

There is no other software like [InflatableOffice party rental software](#) when it comes to helping you put safety procedures into practice and easily document and maintain them.

InflatableOffice will track wind speeds at local weather stations during the event and send out alerts to operators and/or customers when your set threshold is met. Additionally, we log that information as protection from future wind related liability issues. If you want to be safe and not have to spend a lot of effort managing that part of your company, you should seriously consider [InflatableOffice](#).



EQUIPMENT

A QUICK VIEW OF WHAT WE ARE DOING

Now we are getting to the fun stuff of your business. There are a ton of manufacturers of amusement devices and inflatables. I'll list out a few of them below. Remember, this list is neither exhaustive nor indicative of an endorsement.

- [Magic Jump](#)
- [Nflatables](#)
- [Inflatable Depot](#)
- [Happy Jump](#)
- [eInflatables](#)
- [Vertical Reality](#)
- [Spectrum Sports](#)
- [Galaxy Multi Rides](#)
- [Twister Display](#)
- [The Brothers Grimm Games](#)
- [Celina Tent](#)
- [Gold Medal Products](#)

All of the manufacturers above will sell you new equipment, but many of you might be getting into this industry because at some point you found some used equipment. There is nothing wrong with used equipment. It's like anything else you would buy. You can buy new, and while it will cost more, there are real advantages. You can buy used and save a fair amount of money, but it may not last as long and require repair. I've seen inflatables last well over 20 years before. It really just depends on how they were used and taken care of.

When purchasing equipment, make sure you ask for a manual and read through it. Whatever is in the manual is what your state, insurance, and judge and jury will hold you to regardless of how much sense it makes. Make sure you agree with it before purchasing the unit. Some other things you want to consider when purchasing equipment follow.

Weight

You can see 100lbs or more difference in weight when buying from different manufacturers. Sometimes this is due to materials not being as robust. Sometimes it is because they are made for indoor centers and built for more use. Sometimes one manufacturer just figured out a way to make a quality unit weigh less. Weight is a big deal, which your back will tell you after delivering and installing 10 units on a Saturday.

Consumable/Replacement Parts

Some units will have areas that see more wear than others and consequently have removable and replaceable parts. It's good to know the cost of these and what is involved in replacing them. This is another thing to check the manual on. If they require you get parts from them for some reason like some rock wall manufacturers do for belay cables, this can be a real negative. You could end up paying far more than you expect for parts because they have a monopoly on them.

Repair/Warranty

Your units will need repairs at some point. A warranty on your unit isn't very useful if you have to ship it freight and pay for the shipping both ways. Make sure you find out if they have authorized repair shops in your area for warranty work or whether you are close enough to take it back to them. You will likely be doing some minor repairs yourself. Seam repairs will likely require sewing. Sometimes you have a cut and can use [special tape](#) or [rubber cement](#) and a vinyl patch.



InflatableOffice makes it easy for you to add equipment to your account. Simply start typing the name of the item, and if we have it in our database of manufacturers equipment, it will show up. Click on the item and it will fill in the inventory fields as long as we have that information from the manufacturer. This makes adding your equipment, which can be a chore, just a little easier. You will not find this ability in other software.

In addition to your equipment that you are renting out, you will need a lot of supportive business equipment.

DELIVERY VEHICLES

Box Trucks

You need a way to transport your equipment to and from events, and a box truck can be one of the more simple ways to do this. If you are small, one advantage of a nice box truck is that you may not need a warehouse

if you can keep everything stored inside. Originally when I started, I was able to do this. Most likely and hopefully that will not be an option very long because you'll be growing fast. Other advantages of box trucks is that it is easier to drive than a truck and trailer for those of you that are not accustomed to driving trailers.

Trucks & Trailers

You might have a truck or other capable tow vehicle and getting a small single axle open trailer is not difficult. This combination is probably the least expensive way to be ready to deliver. There are also heavier trailers that are enclosed and can carry more weight. Make sure when trailer shopping you consider the weight you will be loading in the trailer. It's easy if you do not have a substantial tow vehicle to get yourself in a position with an unstable trailer or blow out a bearing and potentially axle of your trailer.

STORAGE & WAREHOUSES

Home Garage/Shed

This is the easiest way to get started.

Storage Unit

This is a good in between to upgrade to once you don't have enough room at home but also not enough funds or reason to get a warehouse.

Warehouse

You'll be happiest here. Separating your growing business from your home life will become important. As a business owner, you will feel like you are always working already. Any way to reduce that will become important to you. When storing in a warehouse you'll want to become very organized at the very start or things will get out of control. Some larger businesses actually put units on pallets and use forklifts to put them on pallet racks so they can fit more in their warehouse.

Tools & Supplies

You'll need some pretty capable hand trucks and/or carts to move your units and weights around from event to event. You'll also need to invest in cleaning equipment like cordless vacuums, wet/dry shop vacs for removing water during heavy duty cleaning at the warehouse, disinfectant like Odo Ban, and all purpose vinyl cleaners like Greased Lightning, Simple Green, Mr. Clean Magic Erasers, and other cleaners. Discussing this inside trade groups will lead you to develop your cleaning strategy for different scenarios you may encounter.



Pro Tip

Using your home storage space is the easiest way to get started. Clear a clean area, add an industrial shelf or two to store your smaller inventory items.



WEBSITES

WHAT DO YOU LOOK LIKE ONLINE?

We are moving out of the physical side of your business and into the administrative and office side. I wanted to lead this area with marketing because when you start out, this will be the first thing you'll have to conquer in your office or you will never actually do any business. I'm dividing this into a few sections since there is a lot that can be done on the marketing front.

WEBSITES

Websites are probably the best marketing tool you have these days. A lot of the other marketing topics I'll discuss will revolve around your

website. There are many different website technologies available to you. One of the tendencies of a new company is to build their own website. It can be fun to learn and do it. You will certainly feel a sense of accomplishment when you are done. However, I would recommend against it. I know it's not my money, but this area is so important that it's worth spending money to make sure it's done right. If you insist on making your own website, you can use places like [Wix](#) or [SquareSpace](#) to make it relatively easy to do. One of the problems with these places is that you end up with a decent looking site that doesn't get found on search engines and doesn't convert well because you didn't really know what you were doing. You'll also

need a domain name so that people can find your website, such as www.myrentalsite.com. I suggest purchasing this separately from any website, software, or hosting plan. There are many places such as www.namecheap.com that will sell you a domain name for a good price. The advantage to separating it is that you will have more control. If you buy the domain name through a rental software like some of InlatableOffice's competitors, you will be tied to them. You want to be able to redirect your domain name at any time. You never want someone else owning your domain name.

WORDPRESS

WordPress is in my opinion the best platform to use for your website. Now there are other technologies like WordPress and there are lots of companies and even other rental software that use proprietary technology to build and maintain your website. The problem with that is you are tied to them as long as you want to use that website. WordPress sites can be built by yourself, but they aren't as user friendly and you'll end up with the same issues as building with Wix or SquareSpace. One of the big reasons why I recommend WordPress is because it is the most popular CMS (content management system) in the world with over 455 million sites using it, which is 35% of the Internet. Because of this, you know the search engines work well with them and there is a lot of development, addons, and developers that can assist you.

[InlatableOffice's web design team](#) uses WordPress exclusively. We offer a plugin that interfaces with our software so you can simply enter your items into our software and pages are automatically built on your WordPress website. We host the site for you and include that in the sync fee. Additionally, we offer our IO Essentials website design package, normally a \$500 value, for free currently. You really can't find a better deal! Better yet, if you decide to leave our software, you can take your WordPress site with you. Of course you would lose the auto updating and ecommerce features, but you don't have to start from scratch. No other software company offers this.

Savings Opportunity

For a limited time, we are offering our IO Essentials website design package, normally a \$500 value, for free.

Pro Tip

“Google is the king of search. I’m not saying to not spend any time on the other search engines, but I am saying that you should worry about Google first.”

SEO - SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

You may have heard the term SEO already. If you haven’t, you certainly will as you start into your business. All it means is that you are designing your website in such a way as to make sure search engines want to put you at the top of the page for the search terms you want to be visible for. People aren’t using the phone book to find businesses anymore. They are using search engines. They are typing keywords into a search bar and looking at what comes up first. You want to be what comes up first so that you can make the sale. This topic can quickly get complicated. I’m going to discuss it at a very basic level just to get you started.

Google is the king of search. I’m not saying to not spend any time on the other search engines, but I am saying that you should worry about Google first. Most likely while you are doing that, you will inadvertently get yourself setup on the other search engines as well. When you search for a local service, what do you see on Google? You will see paid ads first, Google Maps listing next, and then what we call organic search results. Those organic search results are there

because they used SEO techniques to get there. When building your website, you need to consider SEO from the beginning. If whoever you employ to do your website doesn’t know much about SEO, you are choosing the wrong company.

[InflatableOffice Website Solutions](#)

knows SEO and will employ many techniques in designing and building your site. Additionally, we use WordPress which is well known for being great for SEO out of the box, without any additional intervention. Plus there are a number of SEO plugins for WordPress that will help you make quick changes showing you what to do to improve your SEO, which unfortunately is a never ending battle. Luckily [InflatableOffice Website Solutions](#) offers additional [SEO packages](#) to help enhance your already well made [InflatableOffice website](#). You can choose a one-time review and enhancement or a monthly plan that will consist of active monitoring and improvements.

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

Remember how I mentioned the Google Maps listing showing high on the Google search page? [Google My Business](#) is what you use to put your listing there. It's a free service and very simple to do. You should do this as soon as possible and make sure you complete your profile as much as possible. Make sure you get people to review you as well. You want Google to like your profile and want to keep you at the top of their Google Maps results for the keywords that match what you are offering to customers. [InflatableOffice](#) rental software will help you maintain your reviews on Google and other places. We have an automated email that goes out to all your customers after their event and it will ask for a rating first. If they give you a good rating, they are randomly directed from the email to one of the review sites you have listed in our software. Doing this will make sure you are always adding good reviews all over the internet. If they indicate they were not pleased with your service, they get sent to through your [InflatableOffice](#) survey so that you can collect information but hide the review from the general public. All good reviews coming into the <https://www.inflatableoffice.com/> survey you can easily flag so that they show on your website. You don't have time to manage keeping your reviews in good condition, and you should not have to. Let us do it automatically for you!


ONLINE ADS

There are a number of places you can advertise online, but I am just going to focus on the two most important places to advertise online: Google and Facebook. The two are very different. To do well in both, you need to understand them. We could spend a ton of time on this topic, but for the sake of brevity, I'll try to keep it short.



[Google Ads](#)

One thing that's unique about Google when compared to Facebook is that on Google, people are actually searching for something that you may be able to provide. On Facebook, they are being social with friends and family and you are trying to convince them they should instead think about giving you money. If you signed up for Google My Business, you'll likely get some free money to spend on your Google Ads. It's really easy to waste money on here, so I'm going to give you a list of things to consider when setting up your account.



KEYWORDS



Keywords

Choose search keywords that match what you offer. Don't try to talk someone who is looking for a slide into getting a bounce house instead through your ads if you don't rent slides. You will just waste money.

Conversions

Write very specific ads so that you reduce the number of people that click on your ads. Most think you want more clicks, but that's not true. You want more good clicks that result in sales. It's the same as saying you want more conversions, which is a word you will hear a lot. So you don't want people clicking to buy if you only rent. You don't want people clicking to find out more info. You want people clicking to rent. So, put "Rent a Bounce House" in your ad title. Yes, this will scare many people away. You don't want those people clicking though. They will cost you money and not make you any.

Landing Pages

Clicking your ads should take them to a page with no other links on it. They should instead be shown exactly what your ad was about, meaning you want the same keywords that you bid on and that are in your ad all over this landing page (another important term). Then you want to direct them to perform an action. You want a simple form that they can easily fill out to get something from you like a discount. Once they fill the form out, you should perform both automatic and manual follow ups to make the sale. This will help your conversions and keep you cost per click low, meaning you can easily spend more to get more customers and outbid your competition.

FACEBOOK

[Facebook](#) tends to be a really good way to find people that may be interested in your products. Unlike Google where customers are looking for you, Facebook is more like typical advertising such as mail, commercials, and so on where you are looking for them. You are trying to find and convince someone that they need or are interested in your services. Consequently, you will build ads and market differently on Facebook.

Audiences

Marketing on Facebook will likely take more touches to get a sale. Consequently, you will want to identify the right audiences to market to. What is your typical customer demographic? You want the demographic that buys from you most, even though there is probably a wide variety of people that will buy from you. Build audiences and market to them with ads targeted at them. The audiences and ads that perform best, you spend more money on. If you are using [InflatableOffice rental software](#), you can [export your customer list to Facebook](#) to help build your audiences. Facebook likes to make look-a-like audiences. You can experiment with this, but sometimes I think it's just a way for Facebook to get you to spend more. Using your exported customer list helps you build an audience of people that have looked at or even purchased your services in the past. You would want to make your ads different for that group to get them to rent again.



Videos

Facebook likes videos. Using videos is a really good way to identify people interested in your services. If you can get someone to watch at least 3 seconds, you can then put them in an audience to market to. So you want your video to be eye catching and very applicable to what you offer for the first 3 seconds.

Pages, Likes, & Groups

Facebook tries to identify a person's interest in other people and businesses on its platform. You should certainly make a business page and attempt to get followers because that will help you identify another audience to market to. Likes are important because the more your posts and pages are liked, the more Facebook will show your information to others that they think are interested, and this doesn't cost you anything. Groups are great tools to build community and become an authority on a subject, which will then enable you to market directly to your group that you're

built trust with. This is also a no cost tool for marketing on Facebook.

A lot of what I have learned about Facebook marketing has come from a friend that owns a marketing company that specializes in Google Ads and Facebook marketing for party rental companies. His company is called [My Ad Academy](#), and he does great work. This topic is a very technical topic and probably seems overwhelming. While I think it's important that you have a background in it, I would recommend hiring someone like Tariq at [My Ad Academy](#) to manage this for you. Even if you just hire him for a few months to help you get things started, that will be money well spent. Google Ads are the first thing people see when they search. They are always at the top of the search results, and in my opinion are more important than organic SEO in some ways.

InflatableOffice allows you to put in Google Ads, Google Analytics, and Facebook tracking code so that you can see how you are getting business and measure conversions. Additionally, we track how each lead comes in and show you what leads are from Google or Facebook as well as how much you are making from them for whatever period you are interested in.





Email

Email marketing has changed over time. It's not as important as it once was. Now people are getting so much spam email that they are not as open to email marketing. We also have so many other communication channels that some people don't even use email anymore. I expect this trend to continue when it comes to the younger crowd. I think that professionally, email will be around for a long time, but personally, other communication methods will replace it. That said, it's still a very valid way to market your services, and no marketing plan is complete without it.

I'm going to discuss newsletters only for email marketing, and we will get into other forms of email marketing and sales later. Newsletters fall into two categories in my opinion: 1) polished formal content and 2) personal direct emails. There are reasons for both. In both cases, you want to make sure your email subject is stellar. If they aren't interested in the subject, they will likely never look at the email. Make it provocative or ridiculous. Say something that makes them curious. Grab their attention.

Polished formal emails are like the emails you get from your favorite department store. They have a similar look every time with a logo, header, footer, and the important sales in the middle. They are like an ad in a magazine. They show your potential customers that you are professional. You can put a lot in these and people don't mind. You are trying to get them to read it, so you want to definitely put the most exciting information and graphics at the top to get them engaged. With these emails, you aren't looking for replies, you are looking for clicks. You'll want to put links in here that lead them to landing pages, like we discussed earlier. Get them to the landing page and collect more information or get them to rent at that moment.

Personal direct emails are emails that look like you sat down to write an email specifically to one of our potential customers. You include their name in a few places, possibly even the subject. There are no logos or fancy graphics. You want them to think that you took time out of your day to compose an email directly to them about something important for them to read. With these emails, you aren't looking for clicks. You are looking for them to reply. Then you have your sales team, which may just be you, respond with an email and phone call in an attempt to move the customer closer to a sale. Don't worry about the people that don't respond. Focus on those that do.

InflatableOffice has an entire email marketing system built into it. It will enable you to build both types of emails discussed above and track many statistics such as open rate, delivery rate, and so on. Additionally since we are also your rental software, we help you manage and filter your lists of customers that you want to send each newsletter to. Plus with our CRM module, we track customer activity with your newsletters and let you know what customers are active so you can easily focus on selling to them among many other things.

Email Marketing

Newsletters fall into two categories in my opinion:

- 1) polished formal content
- 2) personal direct emails.

There are reasons for both.



SALES

LET'S DISCUSS SOME OF THE WAYS YOU WILL BE MAKING SALES

We market our services so that we can sell them. We can be the best marketers ever and never make any sales because we aren't good at sales. Sales is extremely important to your business. This is where your revenue comes from. If you are not good at sales, you should consider finding someone that is and hiring them, even if it's only on a commission basis. Let's discuss some of the ways you will be making sales. Not all of them require you to be good at sales.

Website

Your website should be the best salesman you hire. We've already talked about your website and how important it is for marketing your services. If you've gotten them to your site and are marketing well to them, it makes sense to take them to the next step of getting them to buy and making the sale. People these days

love to purchase over the internet. Having an easy, straightforward and intuitive checkout process makes a huge difference. Consider how often you prefer to buy from Amazon. One of the reasons I'm sure is that it is easy. [InflatableOffice party rental software](#) connected to or running your website makes this process easy for your customers. Plus all of these purchases are put into your account to make it easy for you to work with them later when you want to connect with the customer about their purchase or maybe schedule the delivery, which we will go into detail on later.

Event Hawk

A recent sales tool that has emerged in the industry is a software called [Event Hawk](#). It works with all of the major rental software companies. It, however, works best with InflatableOffice rental software because we have worked with Event Hawk to make it possible for Event Hawk leads to be inserted into your InflatableOffice account. This saves you time and also means that additional automated marketing and sales that

you have setup in your InflatableOffice account will immediately be activated. Event Hawk cleverly gathers leads with a popup that offers your choice of reward to any website visitors and then begins to send automated texts trying to make the sale for you. When the customer responds, you are able to take over and finalize the sale. It's a great tool for improve website sales because it draws in potential customers that may not have gone through the checkout process on their own. You'll need a website before you can use Event Hawk, though. If you don't have one yet, the easiest, cheapest, and surprisingly also the best option is to get a FREE one with InflatableOffice. All you need to do is [register for InflatableOffice software](#). About 15 minutes after registration, you'll have a link to your website emailed to you with instructions on next steps. They handle your hosting and keep your booking software synced with your website for a small monthly fee.

Emails

Obviously emails will be a selling tool as you communicate back and forth with customers. But there are ways to automate emails if you are using a rental software like [InflatableOffice](#). For example, we offer a variety of automated emails that will go out when a customer has either gotten a quote or built a cart and not checked out. You can set up when these go out, what they say, and you can even tailor them to the customer, equipment, or time period they are interested in. Beyond that you can use our automation feature to come up with almost endless ways to automate emails based on many conditions. Additionally, the [InflatableOffice CRM module](#) will track activity of a customer

and allow you to send emails based on their recent activity or lack thereof. If you are paying attention, you will start to understand your customers sales journey. Once you understand it, you can set up your emails and other sales techniques to help them through that journey faster. You can anticipate their questions and concerns and make sure they make it to the end of the journey, which is a fun event for them and a sale for you.

Phone Calls

People don't like to talk on the phone as much anymore. That includes your customers. You'll still have some that will, and usually if they are willing to call you, they are a good lead and a more likely sale in my opinion. So, this may seem obvious, but answer your phone. I see so many people unwilling to answer their phone, and it doesn't make any sense. You are spending all this money to get them to contact you, and then you aren't willing to answer. Similarly, make phone calls. If you have a lead come in from your website or an email, I recommend calling them back first. Then whether they answer or not, send them an email. You will see your sales improve just doing these simple and obvious things.

InflatableOffice has a phone product that is called [IO Phone](#). It will track all your missed, voicemails, received, and placed calls so you can check on your sales reps or even your own performance. All missed calls and voicemails can be emailed to you. Voicemails are transcribed in the email and all of them are matched with your customers and leads in the software. You can easily click to call or text customers when using the software as well. We will talk more about [IO Phone](#) when we get into picking an office phone system.



OFFICE

WHAT DO YOU LOOK LIKE ONLINE?

If you've never had a business before, there are a couple decisions you will have to make to enable you to run your office well.

PHONE

You'll need a business phone number so you can separate your business from personal phone calls. Now some people want a dedicated phone for their business, whether that be a landline or a mobile phone. Popular landline options are usually VOIP systems that run through your internet connection. Often there is a hardware cost up front, but then the monthly usage cost is very low. You do not however need to use a different phone.

A very popular way to handle your phone system is to have a separate business number that rings one or more of your personal phones. Often there is a way to tell if the incoming call is a business call or not. [IO Phone](#) allows you to have the business number show in your caller ID or an automated voice tell you who is calling and wait for you to press 1 to answer. Many people find it very convenient to only have to manage one phone for all their personal and business needs. [IO Phone](#) also has a bunch of on screen features when you are logged into your [InflatableOffice](#) account. Additionally, there are no monthly fees other than the per minute and per text cost. Plus your first phone number is free.

Having a Business Number is Highly Recommended

A very popular way to handle your phone system is to have a separate business number that rings one or more of your personal phones.

EMAIL

You will of course need an email account or provider. There are many options out there. Many people like to use Gmail or Yahoo because they are free. They do however have some serious limitations. While sometimes you can get really good deliverability because no email server is going to block Gmail, they limit your number of emails you are allowed to send daily and hourly. Now that's not normally an issue until you want to send newsletters or automated emails. That's when you can find yourselves quickly hitting limits. The other option is to set up your email for your domain. When you do this you usually are allowed to create more email addresses than you would ever want. So you can have an info@ or sales@ email address easily. To do this you will need an email provider. Most people get this for no additional cost from the same place where you are hosting your website. [InflatableOffice Website Solutions](#) is no different. Additionally, if you are hosting with some other company, we will occasionally allow you to have your email with us if that is something



you are interested in. I think you are generally better having your own email instead of a Gmail or Yahoo email. There are however occasions where you might have issues with deliverability. If your email provider's server gets flagged for spam, you may struggle to deliver your email. A good host will help you prevent that by encouraging a strong password and not overloading their server with many users. Of course [InflatableOffice Website Solutions](#) takes these precautions and more.



ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

No matter what software you choose to manage your website, ecommerce, and rental business, you will need accounting software as well. There are not very many good options to choose from when it comes to small business accounting software. [Intuit's QuickBooks](#) is by far the most popular choice. They offer both online and desktop versions. I'm partial to the online version. You pay a little more, but the conveniences are worth it. You don't have to buy and upgrade every couple years. It doesn't depend on you managing your computer well either. Some international customers prefer [Xero](#), and it seems like they have a good product but it doesn't seem to be the best choice in North America. The primary reason why you need accounting software is because your ecommerce or rental software is only

tracking income and not expenses. When it comes time for taxes, having your accounting software with all your income and expenses entered and properly categorized will be necessary. Another advantage to using [InflatableOffice](#) as your rental software is that once you set up the connection to your QuickBooks desktop or online account, [InflatableOffice](#) will automatically keep sync your invoices, customers, payments, and items so you never have to enter them into QuickBooks. They are always just there and up to date, which is a huge time savings and one less thing to worry about.

RENTAL SOFTWARE

Everyone in the rental industry will agree that rental software is the most important decision you will make for your business and very much worth the cost because of the time savings efficiencies and the additional revenue it will help you generate. Choosing a rental software should be one of your first priorities because depending on the software you choose, all of your other decisions will be affected. Choose one software and you will have to find someone else to handle your website. Choose another software and you may have less accounting software choices. Choose another software and you may be limited on what credit card processor you work with as they force you into fixed rates and higher costs. Choose InlatableOffice and we handle all of these issues for you. Now, I am one of the owners of [InlatableOffice rental software](#), and as you may expect, I know more about it than any other software options that are out there and am of course biased. I could write a lot about InlatableOffice, but I feel like I've linked to it enough in this document that you can easily visit us and see all our features. We are also happy to give you a [free 10 minute demo](#) and answer any of your questions. In fact if you do a demo with us, we are so confident you will prefer us over any other software options that we will give you a free \$50 Amazon gift card just for doing an extended demo with us. You are always best to check out all of your options, and we encourage it. We



know we are the best company you can choose with the brightest future. We are the software company that the biggest and best companies in the party and event rental business choose to grow their businesses the most.

Opportunity

We are so confident you will prefer us over any other software options that we will give you a free \$50 Amazon gift card just for participating in an extended demo.



MORE RESOURCES

I've given you a lot of information. It probably feels a bit like an overload. Honestly I could have gone much, much deeper on everything I've discussed with you, so feel free to contact us and ask questions. Maybe I'll write some more ebooks for you to read more in depth about some of these topics. There is so much for you to learn as you work toward building your business. I want to add a bunch of additional resources here so that you can continue your journey of learning.

IAAPA

[IAAPA](#) is a trade show for all things related to the amusement industry. It will be one of the most fun trade shows you've ever gone to. You can easily bring your family to this show, and even they will enjoy it. It's held every year in Orlando, and you can usually get at least a couple free tickets from any exhibiting vendor. It's a great place to see all the options and opportunities you have as a rental operator. There are lots of meet-ups and events after the show each evening that you can meet other operators and learn from them as well.

RENTALPROS

[RentalPros](#) is a Facebook group that InflatableOffice runs. It's not just about software. We have users of other software contributing to the community as well. This is a great resource for information. This group is never censored and completely free.

EVENT PROFESSIONALS ALLIANCE (EPA)

The [EPA](#) is primarily a Facebook group but they have done trade shows and training sessions for operators in previous years. You can learn a lot by searching their group or asking questions. This group has sponsors and is a little more strict and can be biased toward sponsors.

PROFESSIONAL RENTAL OPERATORS (PRO)

The [PRO](#) is also a Facebook group started by people that didn't like that the EPA was getting sponsor money and censoring things. This group still will censor some things, but they are not sponsored. Things tend to be a little more wild in this group.

MOONWALK FORUM

[This was one](#) of two early groups that have since been mostly replaced by Facebook groups. This place has some great archived information though and still some active users.



Your business deserves an

OfficeUpgrade

Kick your inflatable inventory into 'money-making' gear with our newly upgraded rental software.



All of the productivity features you need to go from red to green. The new dashboard displays real-time information about your rental business - giving you the power to make the right decision anytime of day or night, in the office or on the go.

HOW THE BEST LEAD THE REST

INFLATABLEOFFICE.COM