



CORNERSTONE
ADVERTISING



CASE STUDY

FALCON FORGES A HIGH-FLYING FUTURE

Partnership with Cornerstone Quadruples Sales in 4 Years

www.cornerstonead.com

CORNERSTONE
ADVERTISING

14:1

ROI

221%

REVENUE GROWTH

86%

ABANDONMENT DROP

6%

MARKETING SPEND RATE



TELL ME QUICK!

By hiring an expert, they knew and trusted, and developing a partnership with Cornerstone's team, **Falcon nearly quadrupled its residential home services market revenue from \$2.5 million to \$9.4 million** in less than four years—with a 14:1 ROI while keeping its marketing spend at 6%. Current year-over-year revenue growth is approaching 30%.

Industry

- HVAC — Heating & Cooling
- Plumbing Services
- Residential Home Services
- Northern Virginia Market
- New Home + Residential Service

Client Profile

- Falcon Heating, Air Conditioning & Plumbing
- Owner: Bruce Rahmani
- CTO: Jonathan Rahmani
- Dir. Residential: Errol Nicholson
- Founded in 1988

Application

- Full-Service Marketing Partnership
- Digital + Traditional Channels
- Operational Alignment /CSR
- ServiceTitan Integration
- Acquisition Strategy Support

FROM OBSERVER TO PLAYER

Errol Nicholson is a risk-taker, but that doesn't mean he engages in risky business. A regional rep for a top HVAC manufacturer, he always paid close attention to how "his" contractors worked. Errol watched a lot of smart operators, along with many he knew would never grow beyond a two-van business. He had a lot of those internal "If that was my business, I'd ..." conversations. Then one of the best in Northern Virginia offered him a job.

Errol knew Falcon well and had a lot of respect for owner Bruce Rahmani. The company's longtime focus was on the new-home market, with a couple million dollars of calls annually from existing homeowners helping to keep the cash flowing. Bruce wondered how much more add-on and replacement business Falcon could bring to the bottom line if they made a serious effort to expand it — and gave Errol the opportunity to make that happen.

YOU'RE ONLY HUMAN

It's a lesson we all learn: you may know a lot of stuff, but there's a limit to what you can do truly well. Errol was excited about the opportunity, but he realized Falcon wasn't quite ready to make that push. He didn't see a long-term growth strategy. The company was paying for ServiceTitan and barely scratching the surface of what it could do. And somebody needed to rebuild the under performing website.



"Initially, I was going through probably a thousand line items of things we needed to do or change or modify." — Errol Nicholson



Getting sustainable growth was job #1, so Errol studied the contractors who were dominating local markets and outgrowing everyone else, wanting to know who handled their marketing. Errol heard good things about Cornerstone Advertising and a couple others. He liked the fact Cornerstone handled and coordinated every aspect of marketing and advertising in both digital and traditional channels. That meant Errol wouldn't have to juggle (or referee) multiple vendors. He welcomed having the expertise of an entire team from one partner. Knowing that Cornerstone gave its clients service area exclusivity was also a plus, because it meant potential competitors wouldn't have access to the same brainpower.

FEATURED VOICES

Three key leaders drove this partnership to exceed every benchmark.

ERROL NICHOLSON

Director of Residential Services

Falcon Heating, Air Conditioning & Plumbing

JONATHAN RAHMANI

Chief Technology Officer

Falcon Heating, Air Conditioning & Plumbing

DEBBIE STOPYRA

Senior Marketing Manager

Cornerstone Advertising

KEY FIXES — YEAR 1

- 4 Service Agreement Types Consolidated into 1
- New Mobile-First Website
- Enhanced SEO Setup
- Full ServiceTitan Integration
- Eliminated 3rd-party Call Takers
- CSR Training + Booking Goals

RESULT

CALL ABANDONMENT RATE

-86%

After eliminating the outside call center and retraining internal CSRs — in less than 6 months.

TAKE YOUR MARKS ...

Much thought went into choosing the right marketing partner, but the real work was just starting. Cornerstone's team jumped in with both feet to learn everything they could about Falcon. Cornerstone's Debbie Stopyra became Falcon's outsourced marketing manager, bringing her own expertise from many years of working inside a large HVAC and plumbing contractor and her firsthand knowledge of the complexities of balancing marketing objectives with the expectations of homeowners and the realities of today's labor market.



"Debbie spoke our language and fully grasped what we wanted to accomplish." — Errol Nicholson



Errol fielded an endless series of questions and approval decisions. Some were easy to answer, others demanded data to analyze. When Errol couldn't answer something himself, he turned to the guy at the next desk — Falcon's Chief Technology Officer Jonathon Rahmani. The two men prioritized delivering quick responses to Cornerstone's inquires so Debbie and her team could accelerate their efforts.

GET SET ...

As the Cornerstone team organized and analyzed every aspect of the marketing function, they reviewed an abundance of data. That helped them zero in on the sources of the biggest issues. For example, Falcon was using third-party call takers, and Debbie shared the team's analysis, which showed that none of the inbound calls were being booked on that initial call from the homeowner ... all inbound calls necessitated a call back from someone inside Falcon to facilitate scheduling an appointment. More than a third of potential business was being lost. Eliminating the outside call center and training Falcon's internal CSRs so they better understood the customer's need for urgency reduced the abandonment rate by 86%.

Unlike traditional providers who focused only on creating materials, Cornerstone's comprehensive analysis of Falcon's operations brought a wide variety of issues to Errol's attention, along with solutions based on best practices. After all, knowing what's broken is the first step in making improvements.

"We had four different service agreement types, and now we have one. We now have a mobile-first website, which is a good thing, because we have mobile-first homeowners. Our search engine setup has been enhanced. And we're finally taking advantage of the power of ServiceTitan, because we're tracking everything correctly. So, you get all this data, everyone is on the same page, then you start to focus, develop goals, put the plan in place ... and in less than 6 months, we were going."

... AND GO!

By "going," Errol didn't mean using just one or two channels. Cornerstone's entire program was underway, the phones were ringing, and the team

was already analyzing results and fine-tuning the effort. "Once you start rolling, you start seeing the rewards, you start seeing the benefits, and it's constantly morphing into something even better."

He was surprised by the team's responsiveness and their desire to make the program even more effective. "Cornerstone made recommendations and we'd fix, change, or institute what was needed so we could be successful. Like everything else in life, the marketplace changes, the search engines change." Falcon immediately felt the positive impacts of those changes.



"It's constantly morphing into something even better. There is no standing still." — Errol Nicholson



Cornerstone recommended strategies across direct mail, paid search expansion, aggregator leads, drip campaigns, and OTT TV ads — raising Falcon's profile market-wide and improving homeowner recognition across all channels.

PLANNING TO SUCCEED

Everyone talks about developing the right budget and the right plan, but Cornerstone reminded Errol that wasn't enough. "Once the phone starts ringing, do you have the team in place to execute? Thankfully, we did and didn't hesitate to add the right people where we needed them or invest in training. I hired Cornerstone's CSR consultant and trainer to help develop and provide our lead CSR with scripts, booking goals, spiff programs, and training materials."



"We didn't hesitate to add the right people where we needed them or invest in training." — Errol Nicholson



Most marketing providers concentrate on advertising and other channels, but Errol was impressed at Cornerstone's interest in improving the performance of his entire staff. "Even with everything Cornerstone can do, you can't succeed without the right internal team. From management to technicians to CSRs, you have to keep everyone updated and hold them accountable to make sure that you're doing everything correctly." The data confirmed that Falcon's team was becoming more effective and pointed to areas that would benefit from additional improvements.

DATA-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS

Errol quickly became accustomed to receiving detailed data from the Cornerstone team — not just a truckload of numbers, but the specific factors Falcon needed to make the right decisions. Tracking included everything from cost-per-call to booking rates, as well as ROAS for each marketing channel.



"It's important to know your numbers and to execute daily." — Errol Nicholson



WHAT GETS TRACKED

- Cost Per Inbound Call
- Booking Rates by Source
- ROAS Per Marketing Channel
- Seasonal Spend Shifting
- CSR Booking Goal Metrics
- Campaign-Level Performance



"There's just too much going on in the HVAC world to be able to think about it all or do it all yourself."

— Errol Nicholson



"We have help from all these experts at Cornerstone who understand our business and our market like we do. I can't imagine doing it any other way."

— Errol Nicholson



The more data Errol reviewed with Debbie, the more he appreciated the value. "It's important to know your numbers and to execute daily. With Cornerstone's help, we know which campaigns have worked best and which didn't connect with homeowners as well. Sometimes that means stopping a campaign and shifting our efforts elsewhere. The more Falcon and Cornerstone study the data, the more we can customize efforts and drill down to achieve that efficiency."

The timeliness of the data also gave Errol a key decision-making advantage. "You always have to act with a sense of urgency because any delay in responding to calls hurts your numbers for the next day and for the week, which then messes you up for the month. You have to execute right now."

Errol's willingness to put new advertising and operational ideas to the test also helped. "Cornerstone showed us how concepts like automated emails and SMS campaigns worked for their other clients. We're aggressive and not afraid to try, because we know Cornerstone is paying close attention to the results. If a tactic is successful, fine. If not, we'll just turn off the spigot and move on. Together, we're always learning."

EXPERTISE AT HAND

It didn't take long for Errol to develop a deep trust in Debbie and the Cornerstone team, because he recognized the value of their expertise. "Cornerstone understands what we want the business to become and they have the experience to develop the strategies to help us accomplish it. Whether we're talking about how to integrate AI search or what to look for when considering acquisitions, their expertise is essential. There's just too much going on in the HVAC and plumbing world to be able to think about it all or do it all yourself. We have help from all these experts at Cornerstone who understand our business and our market like we do. I can't imagine doing it any other way."

GOOD ADVICE FOR OWNERS

In his previous role, Errol listened to many contractors talk about their dreams and frustrations with their businesses. Most were hesitant to make the kind of investment real growth demands. "They want to grow, but many are afraid of the spend. That's natural, but you can't think about it as spending money. If you do it the right way, you're making the money back through growth. Soon, you're making a lot more than what you've invested."

He adds that attitude is an even more important consideration. "You can't be afraid to go for it. If you are, you're never going to retire. You'll be living in the business and unable to delegate tasks that would be better handled by others. You'll never be able to hire a great service manager, the best technicians, or the CSRs homeowners love because you don't have enough money coming in to invest. If you can't take those things off your plate, your company will never be as successful as it can be. With the right people and strategies, you can handle \$5 or \$6 million with the same people who are doing \$2 or \$3 million. But that's just the next step. You need to get over \$9 or \$10 million before you can really breathe."

\$9.4M
REVENUE AT YEAR 4

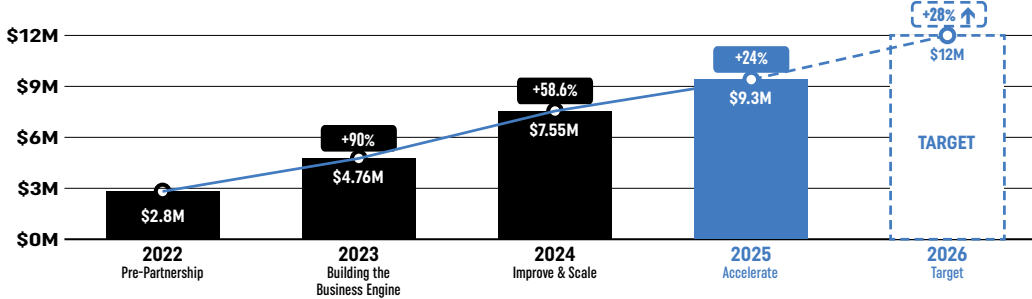
+29%
YOY REVENUE GROWTH

\$12M
NEXT REVENUE TARGET

SUCCESS BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

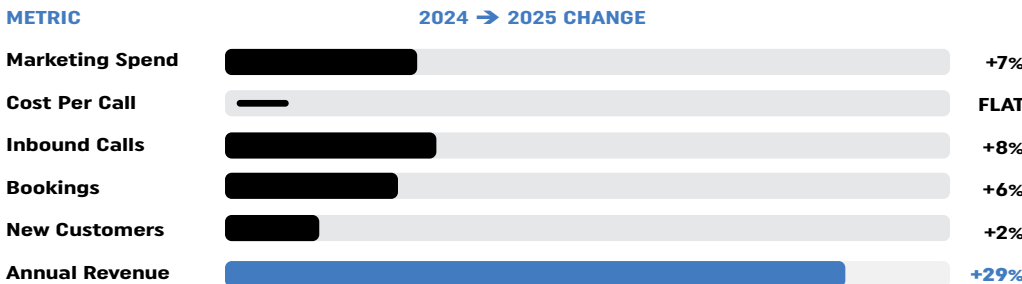
Conventional wisdom — and Cornerstone's own experience — say aggressive home service businesses around Falcon's size need to spend 10-12% of annual revenue to achieve the kind of growth they want. But because Falcon and Cornerstone collaborated so efficiently and built such a strong operational partnership, the strategies generated enough business to reach Falcon's targets for a budget that was substantially smaller.

2022-2026 SALES GROWTH



Tracking and constantly analyzing the numbers has allowed Errol to fine-tune Falcon's spend and shift dollars from slower months to capture more business during peak seasons. For example, Cornerstone recommended that Errol back off on Falcon's OTT HVAC and plumbing campaigns during the slowest shoulder months (February and September in their market), when revenue dips. "We keep what we don't spend then in the bucket for when we're ready to step on the pedal."

2024 VS. 2025 – EVERY METRIC AT A GLANCE



As the strategies yield ever-higher returns, Falcon is already preparing for the next stages of growth. "We're at \$9+ million now and are gearing up for \$12 million by hiring the key staff and managers we need to get us there. If we can grow at 20-30%, we can triple the company's size in just a few years." The company's early-2026 growth rate is averaging better than 20% over 2025 performance.



"If you do it the right way, you're making the money back through growth."

— Errol Nicholson



GROWTH TARGETS

- Current Revenue **\$9.3M**
- Next Target **\$12M**
- 2026 YTD Growth **+20%**
- Long-Term Vision **\$30M+**



"We're hitting our numbers with a budget of just 6% and spending even less."

— Errol Nicholson



THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Errol admits that pursuing an aggressive, disciplined growth strategy demands a lot of internal effort, even with the help of his Cornerstone team. "The struggle never ends, but the fun begins when you see your investment bring money in and when you reach the stage where you can start thinking about growth through acquisitions. We couldn't be more excited or more confident about the company's future."

Over three years, Cornerstone helped Errol transform Falcon from an under-scaled marketing program into a disciplined, diversified, and performance-driven growth engine. Through strategic channel expansion, data-driven allocation, operational alignment, and brand investment, Falcon boosted revenues by 221% while maintaining a disciplined approach to marketing investments.

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

A key element of the long-term growth plan is a layered customer database strategy centered on using ServiceTitan to track the age of customer equipment, then match the right technician to the appropriate opportunity. With fairly new customers, the initial focus is on accessories and maintenance. The 5-10-year timeframe shifts the focus to repairs and opportunities for upgrades. Older equipment creates opportunities for replacement business. "As we examine the top-line numbers and factor in the aging, we can see what's ahead. Once you're a \$10 million company, you'll shortly become a \$20 million company, and then a \$30 million company. It's an approach that creates predictable revenue and compounding growth over the long term."

Errol admits that homeowners in the 1-5-year range don't create a large ROI initially. "Still, they need humidifiers, UV lights, and air cleaners. If we keep them loyal by keeping them happy, we'll eventually get the replacement business. Meanwhile, they're also turning to us for plumbing and water heaters. Do that consistently year over year, and you're creating lagging growth that will mature into a monster."

PREPARING FOR ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITIES

Acquisitions of other contractors in nearby markets is another piece of the long-term strategy. To gain practice, Falcon opted to purchase a local competitor. "We bought a small company so we could experience everything that's involved. How would it all work? How do we integrate a company that's not on ServiceTitan and bring their information into our database? How do we transition their brand and reputation?" A second acquisition of a small plumbing contractor brought more potential HVAC customers.

Errol knew the acquisitions would create operational and branding challenges that Cornerstone would help Falcon overcome. "We wanted to walk before we started running, and the acquisition was both a proof of concept and a learning opportunity. Cornerstone helped us develop a playbook for future acquisitions."

SUMMARY

Falcon and Cornerstone's efficiency allowed them to hit targets at just 6% marketing spend — well below the 10–12% industry benchmark — while YOY revenue grew 29%.

FINAL PHASE

Gearing up for \$12M by hiring key staff. Early-2026 growth rate is averaging better than 20% over 2025 performance.



STRATEGIC EVOLUTION

REVENUE AND AD SPEND

2023

REVENUE GOAL \$6M	ACTUAL REVENUE \$4.76M from \$2.9M	AD SPEND \$550K
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2024

REVENUE GOAL \$8M	ACTUAL REVENUE \$7.55M +58.6% YOY	AD SPEND \$550K
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2025

REVENUE GOAL \$9M	ACTUAL REVENUE \$9.31M +23.4% YOY	AD SPEND \$630K
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2023 BUILDING THE BUSINESS ENGINE

Cornerstone and Falcon built the foundation — establishing multi-channel strategy, fixing critical operational gaps, and creating the data infrastructure needed for sustained growth.

STRATEGIC MOVES THIS YEAR

DIVERSIFY CHANNELS → Built multi-channel strategy across direct mail, paid search, LSAs, OTT, and co-op programs.

IMPACT → Scalable marketing foundation established

BRAND INTRODUCTION → Launched OTT streaming campaigns to put Falcon in front of homeowners at scale.

IMPACT → Increased brand visibility market-wide

DIGITAL EXPANSION → Increased paid search investment and structured LSAs to capture in-market intent.

IMPACT → More high-intent demand captured

OPERATIONAL FIX → Identified third-party call center failures and rebuilt CSR process with booking goals and training.

IMPACT: → 86% drop in call abandonment rate

DATA DISCIPLINE → Implemented cost-per-call and ROI tracking across every channel from day one.

IMPACT → Informed budget reallocation enabled

2024 IMPROVE & SCALE WHAT WORKS

With the foundation in place, Cornerstone and Falcon doubled down on what was driving results — cutting what wasn't, scaling what was, and tightening the connection between marketing and booking performance.

STRATEGIC MOVES THIS YEAR

CHANNEL REFINEMENT → Eliminated under-performing placements and optimized co-op participation for greater efficiency.

IMPACT → Improved marketing efficiency

DIGITAL SCALING → Increased paid search and OTT investment behind the channels proving strongest returns.

IMPACT → Expanded high-intent lead capture

BUDGET REALLOCATION → Shifted spend seasonally — pulling back in slow months, stepping on the gas during peak demand.

IMPACT → More disciplined allocation

BOOKING IMPROVEMENT → Aligned marketing and CSR execution so every lead generation was matched with the team to close it.

IMPACT: → Higher conversion of inbound demand

BRAND STRENGTHENING → Maintained consistent OTT presence to reinforce Falcon's name recognition across the market.

IMPACT → Stronger brand recognition

2025 ACCELERATE THROUGH HIGH-INTENT CHANNELS

Falcon hit its target and kept going. Cornerstone shifted investment decisively toward digital and lifecycle channels — and Falcon grew 29% year over year with only a 7% increase in marketing spend.

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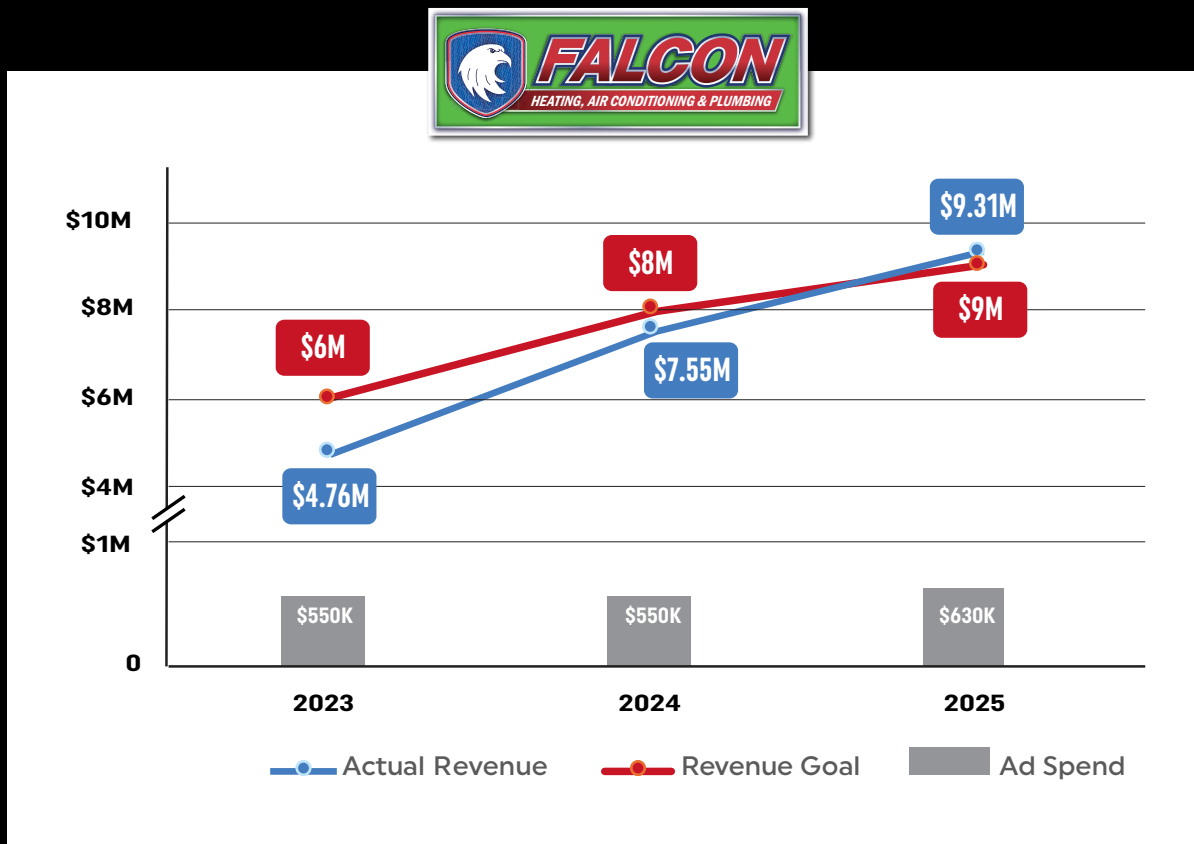
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IMPACT → Stronger brand recognition

THE TAKEAWAY

Marketing spend grew just 7%
while revenue grew 29%.

Cost per call held flat while
call volume and bookings climbed —
the clearest demonstration of disciplined
and efficiency that defined this partnership.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tracy Paul is principal owner and founder of Cornerstone Advertising Inc., where he has helped home service contractors of all sizes grow and become market-dominant companies in cities across the country for more than 30 years. Tracy is also a Service Nation Premier Coach. Cornerstone is a full-service marketing firm that includes both traditional and digital advertising for the home service industry, and gives

you access to a complete marketing department for less than it costs to hire a full-time marketing director, using proven strategies delivered through a marketing manager who treats your business like it was your own.

Learn more at: www.cornerstonead.com



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