

THE SHOP

the brand

BUSINESS EXPANSION & MARKETING STRATEGY

For the barber
Folsom, CA
February 2026

Executive Summary

This plan lays out how the barber () can grow his work at the barbershop in Folsom over the next several months. It rests on three pillars. The first is building the barber's social media into a real client-acquisition engine. The second is opening an online store for grooming products and branded merch. The third is adding revenue streams that earn money outside of chair hours. The recommendations draw on current 2025 to 2026 industry data and platform-specific marketing numbers.

the barbershop already has the pieces that matter. The shop reviews well at 4.5 stars across platforms. It sits on the shop in a walkable stretch of Folsom. And it carries a look that blends American traditional tattoo art with hip-hop culture, which is exactly the kind of distinct identity that travels well on social. the barber's current clientele runs the range: kids, monthly regulars, and weekly professionals like salespeople and lawyers. That is a broad base, and the right content plus some local advertising can widen it.

The timing helps. The U.S. barber industry is growing fast, with revenue reaching roughly \$7 billion in 2025 and a compound annual growth rate of 9.8 percent over the prior five years. Social media has become the front door for most shops, and clients increasingly pick a barber by scrolling an Instagram portfolio before they ever book. This plan is built to take advantage of both trends.

Part 1: Social Media Marketing Strategy

1.1 Platform Strategy Overview

the barber should build around two main platforms, Instagram and TikTok, and treat Facebook as a support channel for local reach and paid ads. Instagram matters most because clients actively browse a barber's portfolio before booking a chair. TikTok is where a single clip can reach thousands of people who have never heard of the shop. Facebook earns its place through targeting. Its ad tools are the sharpest for hyper-local campaigns across Folsom, El Dorado Hills, and Sacramento.

1.2 Instagram Strategy: Content Pillars and Posting Schedule

Optimal Posting Times (2025 to 2026 Data)

Buffer analyzed more than 9.6 million posts, and their findings line up with data from Hootsuite, Sprout Social, and RecurPost. The windows below tend to deliver the strongest engagement.

Day	Best Times to Post	Notes
Monday	10 AM to 6 PM (peak at 3 PM)	Strong start-of-week engagement
Tuesday	5 to 8 AM, 3 to 7 PM	Two windows: early risers and after work
Wednesday	12 PM, 5 to 9 PM (peak at 6 PM)	Highest engagement day overall
Thursday	4 to 5 PM, 9 PM	Strong evening engagement, second best day

Day	Best Times to Post	Notes
Friday	4 PM	Lower engagement, good for lighter content
Saturday	10 AM to 1 PM	Morning engagement, great for Stories
Sunday	5 to 7 PM	Evening browsing, prep-for-the-week mindset

Recommended Posting Frequency

- **Feed posts (Reels, carousels, photos):** three to five per week. Buffer's 2025 research calls this the sweet spot for maximizing reach without burning out.
- **Instagram Stories:** one to two per day at minimum to stay top of mind. Adam Mosseri, who heads Instagram, has recommended this pace publicly.
- **Reels specifically:** aim for three or more per week. Reels are still the number one discovery format on Instagram in 2026, and the algorithm now rewards originality, watch time, saves, and shares over raw likes.

Content Pillar Framework

Organize everything around five recurring pillars. This keeps the feed varied and takes the guesswork out of what to post next.

Pillar	Content Types	Goal
The Craft	Transformation Reels (before and after), time-lapse fades, razor work close-ups, satisfying clips	Show off skill and pull in new clients through shareability
The Culture	Shop-vibe videos, the traditional art on the walls, hip-hop playing, sticker-wall tours, client banter	Build brand identity and a sense of community
The Pro Tips	Quick tutorials on home styling, product picks, and how to tell your barber what you want	Position the barber as an authority and earn saves
The Community	Client spotlights, local business shoutouts, Folsom events, collaborations with local creators	Strengthen local roots and cross-promote
The Lifestyle	Behind-the-scenes of the barber's day, personal style, merch teasers, music picks	Humanize the brand and build merch interest

Key 2026 Algorithm Insights

- Instagram now runs an Originality Score that penalizes watermarked content, such as clips carrying a TikTok logo. Always make native content for each platform.
- Saves, shares (DM shares especially), and total watch time carry the most weight in 2026. Likes matter far less than they used to.
- Hook viewers in the first two seconds. Open a Reel with the payoff or the most striking moment, not the setup.
- Use three to five targeted hashtags per post, not thirty. Lean on keywords in captions and on-screen text, since Google now indexes Instagram posts and profiles.

- Post Reels in 9:16 vertical with text overlays so they land even when the sound is off.

1.3 TikTok Strategy

TikTok can reach far beyond a follower count because the algorithm pushes content to strangers based on how people engage with it. the barber should post Reels-style clips natively, with no watermarks, and lean into what TikTok rewards: raw, real footage over anything that looks overly produced.

TikTok-Specific Content Ideas

- **POV cuts:** film from the client's seat as they settle into the chair. This angle performs unusually well for barbers.
- **Storytime cuts:** talk through a story while you cut. Funny client requests, barbershop wisdom, an industry hot take.
- **Sound trends:** jump on trending audio early. Transformation clips sync beautifully with a dramatic reveal sound.
- **Rate My Fade and duets:** engage with other barbers' content to share audiences back and forth.
- **The signature series:** a recurring series built around Folsom and Sacramento culture, local businesses, and the area-code identity.

1.4 Facebook Strategy

Facebook is less about organic posting and more about two things it does well: local community groups and paid advertising. the barber should keep a simple business page, share his key Instagram posts over to it, and put most of the paid budget here because the local targeting is so strong.

- Join and stay active in Folsom and El Dorado Hills community groups, including Nextdoor and the local Facebook groups.
- Share client reviews and transformation photos, always with permission.
- Use Facebook Events for shop events, pop-ups, and promotions.

1.5 Paid Advertising Strategy and Budget

Current Ad Cost Benchmarks (2025 to 2026)

Meta ad costs across Facebook and Instagram were well documented through 2025. The benchmarks below give the barber a realistic starting point for planning.

Metric	Facebook	Instagram
Cost per click (CPC)	\$0.50 to \$2.00 (avg ~\$0.87)	\$0.40 to \$2.00 (avg ~\$1.17)
Cost per 1,000 impressions (CPM)	\$8 to \$20 (avg ~\$16)	\$5 to \$10 (avg ~\$8.16)
Minimum monthly budget	\$300+ recommended	\$300 to \$500 to start
Best ad formats	Carousel, video, retargeting	Reels ads, Stories ads

Metric	Facebook	Instagram
Seasonal low (best value)	January to March	January to March
Seasonal high (expensive)	Nov to Dec (Q4 holiday)	Nov to Dec (Q4 holiday)

Recommended Budget Tiers

For a solo barber renting a chair, the aim is efficient local reach, not scale for its own sake. Three tiers cover the range.

Tier	Monthly Spend	Expected Reach	Best For
Starter	\$150 to \$300	15K to 40K local impressions	Brand awareness and testing what works
Growth	\$300 to \$600	40K to 80K+ impressions	Active client acquisition and filling the book
Accelerator	\$600 to \$1,000	80K to 150K+ impressions	E-commerce launch, merch drops, events

Ad Campaign Recommendations

1. **Hyper-local awareness.** Target men 18 to 55 within a 10-mile radius of the shop. Run Reels-style video ads built from the barber's best transformation clips. Budget \$5 to \$10 a day, objective set to reach.
2. **Retargeting.** Install the Meta Pixel on any booking page or website, then retarget people who visited but did not book. These ads run cheaper and convert at higher rates. Budget \$3 to \$5 a day.
3. **New-client promo.** Run a first-visit offer (\$5 off, a free beard trim with a haircut) aimed at Folsom, El Dorado Hills, Orangevale, and Rancho Cordova. Budget \$5 to \$10 a day in two-to-four-week pushes.
4. **E-commerce launch (later phase).** Once the store is live, run Instagram Shopping ads and carousels featuring the merch line. Budget \$10 to \$15 a day during the launch window.

Pro Tips for Ad Efficiency

- Start at \$10 to \$20 a day total across campaigns. Spending under \$300 a month limits Meta's ability to optimize delivery.
- Run ads Tuesday through Thursday, which matches the strongest organic engagement days.
- Refresh creatives every two to three weeks so ads do not go stale.
- Turn on Meta's Advantage+ automation. It can cut cost per acquisition by as much as 20 percent.
- Q1, January through March, has the cheapest rates of the year as competition drops after the holidays. That makes it the ideal window to test.

Part 2: E-Commerce and Product Strategy

2.1 The Opportunity

Men's grooming is a large and fast-moving market, and online sales are its fastest-growing channel, expanding at double-digit annual rates as more men buy their products through a phone rather than a shelf. That shift matters for a barber. Many shops now pull 15 to 20 percent of their monthly revenue from retail product sales, and roughly 40 percent of clients in the chair buy a recommended product during a visit. An online store extends that same instinct past closing time. It lets the barber earn revenue around the clock, not only during chair hours.

2.2 Platform Recommendation: Shopify

Shopify is the standard for small-business e-commerce, and it connects directly to Instagram Shopping, Facebook Shops, and TikTok Shop. The Basic plan at \$39 a month is enough to start. It comes with payment processing, inventory management, a mobile-friendly checkout, and the option to connect a custom domain such as shop.ninesixteenbarbershop.com or the shop domain.

2.3 Product Line Strategy

Tier 1: Hair and Grooming Products (Highest Margin, Easiest to Start)

the barber should stock curated specialty products, not the mass-market brands sitting on every Target shelf. The whole value here is curation and a personal recommendation from a barber people already trust. Categories to carry:

- **Pomades and clays.** Two or three brands across different hold and shine levels. Favor brands with strong packaging that fits the American traditional look, such as Suavecito, Reuzel, or Uppercut Deluxe.
- **Beard oils and balms.** High margin, small, and easy to ship. Local or craft brands add a point of difference.
- **Shampoos and conditioners.** Salon-quality options clients cannot grab at a drugstore.
- **Scalp treatments and tonics.** A growing category as more men pick up a scalp-care routine.
- **Pre and post-shave products.** A natural fit for the barbershop's straight-razor identity.

Tier 2: Tools and Accessories (Medium Margin, Strong Brand Identity)

- **Straight razors.** Two or three quality options across price points from \$30 to \$150. These are aspirational buys that sit right on brand.
- **Custom combs.** Commission branded combs in wood, acetate, or metal with the the brand logo. Cheap to produce, easy to ship, and highly brandable.
- **Barber capes and aprons.** Branded gear for other barbers and collectors.
- **Travel grooming kits.** Bundle a comb, a small pomade, and a beard oil in a branded pouch.

Tier 3: Lifestyle and Merch (Brand Building, Community)

This is where the American traditional plus hip-hop aesthetic really sets the barbershop apart. The merch should read like a streetwear drop, not a generic barbershop souvenir.

- **T-shirts.** Heavyweight cotton blanks (Comfort Colors, Gildan Hammer, or LA Apparel). Put original art on them that pulls from the shop's own style: bold lines, eagles, roses, skulls, anchors, the the shop area code, hip-hop references.
- **Hoodies.** Seasonal fall and winter drops on premium blanks. Embroidered the brand logo on the chest, a larger back graphic.
- **Hats.** Snapbacks and dad hats with embroidered the brand or the shop branding. A New Era-style structured cap is worth considering.
- **Stickers.** Low cost and high engagement. Give them away with purchases and sell packs of five to ten. Stickers are one of the best grassroots marketing tools a shop has.
- **Enamel pins.** A natural companion to the sticker line, with collectible barber-themed designs.

Part 3: Branding and Design Direction

Since the barber has access to a graphic designer at no cost, the goal is to hand them clear briefs. Everything below is meant to carry the shop's physical style, the American traditional art, hip-hop, and sticker culture, into digital and merchandise applications so the look holds together across every surface.

3.1 Core Logo Suite

the barber needs a flexible logo system with a few lockups for different uses:

1. **Primary logo.** A bold, hand-drawn wordmark reading THE SHOP or the brand with traditional embellishments such as a banner ribbon, a heavy outline, and a little texture. Think classic tattoo-flash lettering.
2. **Icon mark.** A standalone icon that reads clearly at small sizes for a profile picture, hat embroidery, or a sticker. Options include a stylized the shop in a circle, a straight razor crossed with a comb inside a shield, or an eagle holding clippers.
3. **Tagline lockup.** The primary logo paired with a line like Folsom, CA, Est. 2015 or Sharp Cuts. Real Culture. underneath. (Confirm the founding year before it goes to print.)
4. **Minimal mark.** Just the brand in a clean, modern font for subtle uses like interior merch tags and photo watermarks.

3.2 Design Brief for the Designer

Visual Identity Keywords

Bold, hand-drawn, heritage, street, unapologetic, clean but gritty, Sacramento pride, traditional tattoo flash, hip-hop culture, barbershop lineage.

Color Palette

Primary: deep navy blue, classic red, cream or off-white, with gold accents. Secondary: black and charcoal gray. This palette nods to both traditional tattoo ink and a timeless barbershop feel.

Typography

Headlines: a bold serif or slab serif with a hand-drawn quality, close to traditional tattoo flash. Body: a clean sans-serif in line with the shop's current online presence. Accent: a script or hand-lettered face for taglines and callouts.

Illustration Style

American traditional tattoo flash: bold black outlines, limited color fills, and classic motifs like eagles, roses, daggers, banners, anchors, and skulls. Work in barber-specific imagery such as straight razors, barber poles, clippers, and combs. Then mix in hip-hop and Sacramento elements: boomboxes, turntables, microphones, the the shop area code, a Sacramento skyline silhouette, or California bear motifs.

3.3 Merch Design Concepts to Brief

1. **The Classic.** A large back print of a straight razor wrapped in a rose banner, THE SHOP arched above and FOLSOM, CA below. Small the brand icon on the front left chest. Full American traditional style.
2. **The the shop.** The area code rendered in massive, ornate tattoo-flash lettering with barber elements woven in, a comb forming part of the 9, clippers inside the 6. Works on tees, hoodies, and hats.
3. **The Eagle.** An American traditional eagle gripping a straight razor in its talons over a banner reading SHARP CUTS. Bold, iconic, poster-worthy.
4. **Hip-Hop Heritage.** A boombox or turntable fused with barber tools, clippers as the tonearm, a comb as a fader. A nod to the shop's musical identity.
5. **Sticker Bomb tee.** An all-over print, or a large rectangular chest graphic, that mimics the shop's sticker wall. Chaotic, colorful, collectible.
6. **Sticker pack designs.** Five to ten individual stickers in the shop's style: a straight razor, a the shop script, a small barber pole, a rose, a skull with a fresh fade, the the brand icon, a Folsom, CA stamp.

Part 4: Revenue Diversification

Beyond the chair and the online store, the barber can build several income streams that compound over time.

4.1 Membership and VIP Program

Memberships are one of the fastest-growing revenue models in barbering because they turn one-off visits into predictable monthly income. Structure a plan at \$80 to \$120 a month that includes one haircut, 10 to 15 percent off additional services, 10 percent off retail and online products, priority booking, and a free monthly product sample. That locks in the weekly and bi-weekly regulars and smooths out cash flow.

4.2 In-Chair Product Sales

This is the simplest boost of all: sell the products the barber already uses during the cut. Keep a curated shelf in view of the chair. When a client says their hair looks good, that is the moment to offer the exact product just used. Industry data suggests roughly 40 percent of clients will buy when a barber recommends something in the moment. Target an average add-on of \$5 to \$15 per visit.

4.3 Bundled Service Upsells

Encourage add-ons like hot-towel shaves, beard shaping, scalp treatments, and facials. Make the upsell part of the experience rather than a pitch. A line as simple as, want me to clean up the beard too, should come up naturally mid-conversation. Industry data shows upselling services adds 20 to 30 percent to base revenue.

4.4 Affiliate and Brand Partnerships

As the barber's following grows, brands will start reaching out on their own. Until then he can approach specialty names like Suavecito, Baxter of California, Blind Barber, or Layrite and sign up as an affiliate, earning a commission on sales driven through a personal link or discount code. Even a small, niche following of 1,000 to 5,000 can generate meaningful affiliate income in a category like barbering.

4.5 Content Monetization

Once the barber clears 10,000 followers on Instagram or TikTok, more options open up: Instagram creator bonuses, the TikTok Creator Fund, and paid brand deals. Even before those thresholds, he can monetize tutorials and teaching content through a paid newsletter or a Patreon aimed at aspiring barbers.

4.6 Pop-Up Events and Collaborations

Partner with local breweries, streetwear shops, tattoo parlors, or car shows for pop-up cut events. These generate a huge amount of content, put the barber in front of entirely new audiences, and build his reputation as a community figure. A quarterly the shop Cuts and Culture event that pairs live haircuts with local vendors, music, and merch drops would be a strong anchor.

Part 5: Estimated Monthly Investment

The plan spreads costs across several categories, and not all of them hit at once. The table below sketches a realistic monthly range for the first 90 days, separating recurring costs from the one-time outlays that front-load Phase 1 and Phase 2. Treat these as planning estimates. Actual quotes for print, embroidery, and wholesale will move the numbers.

Category	Type	Estimated Cost
Shopify Basic plan	Recurring	\$39 / month
Paid ads (Starter to Growth tier)	Recurring	\$150 to \$600 / month
Link-in-bio tool (Linktree or similar)	Recurring	\$0 to \$10 / month
Email platform (starter tier)	Recurring	\$0 to \$30 / month
Logo suite (free designer)	One-time	\$0
First sticker run (500 to 1,000 units)	One-time	\$100 to \$250
Initial merch (tees + one hat design)	One-time	\$400 to \$900
Opening product inventory (wholesale)	One-time	\$500 to \$1,500

Rough first-month total: about \$190 to \$680 in recurring costs, plus \$1,000 to \$2,650 in one-time setup spread across the first two phases. A lean start closer to the low end is entirely workable, then reinvest revenue into ads and inventory as the store and following grow.

Part 6: 90-Day Action Plan

Here is a prioritized roadmap broken into three 30-day phases.

Phase 1: Foundation (Days 1 to 30)

Social Media Setup

1. Audit the barber's Instagram () and the shop account (@nine.sixteen). Decide whether to build the personal brand, the shop brand, or both. The recommendation is to make the personal brand and the primary growth engine.
2. Update the bio with keywords for Instagram SEO: the barber Barber | Folsom, CA | Book: [link] | Shop: [link coming soon].
3. Set up a Linktree or equivalent link-in-bio page with a booking link, the future shop link, and a New Client landing page.
4. Plan the first two weeks of content using the five-pillar framework. Batch-film five to ten Reels in one session to build a content bank.
5. Start posting three to five times a week on Instagram and three or more times a week on TikTok. Post Stories daily.

Branding and Design

1. Brief the designer on the full logo suite from Section 3.1, targeting delivery within three weeks.
2. Start the sticker designs in parallel, since stickers are the fastest merch item to produce.
3. Source sticker printing through StickerMule, Sticker Giant, or a local Sacramento print shop for the community tie-in.

Business

1. Set up the Shopify account at \$39 a month. Do not launch publicly yet, just configure the backend.
2. Research and contact three to five specialty grooming brands about wholesale accounts (Suavecito, Reuzel, Uppercut Deluxe, Baxter of California, Blind Barber).
3. Begin collecting client emails, even with a simple clipboard at the chair. An email list is the most valuable audience the barber actually owns.

Phase 2: Build and Test (Days 31 to 60)

1. Launch the first paid campaign, Hyper-Local Awareness, at \$5 to \$10 a day on Meta. Test three different Reels as ad creatives.
2. Receive the logo files. Apply them across the Instagram profile, bio, and Story-highlight covers, and start merch mockups.
3. Order the first sticker run of 500 to 1,000 units. Start giving them away with every haircut.
4. Source merch blanks and get quotes for screen printing and embroidery. Start with one or two t-shirt designs and one hat.

5. Stock the Shopify store with grooming products. Soft-launch to existing clients only for feedback.
6. Begin a weekly email newsletter: one cut highlight, one product recommendation, one personal note.
7. Plan the first pop-up or collaboration event for Month 3.

Phase 3: Launch and Scale (Days 61 to 90)

1. Publicly launch the Shopify store with a coordinated social push, an Instagram Reel, a TikTok video, a Story series, and an email blast all on the same day.
2. Drop the first merch collection as a limited run of 50 to 100 tees and 30 to 50 hats. Market it as a limited drop to create urgency.
3. Scale ad spend to \$300 to \$500 a month and add a retargeting campaign for website visitors.
4. Host the first the shop Cuts and Culture pop-up. Document everything for content.
5. Launch the VIP membership for loyal clients. Announce it by email, in the chair, and on social.
6. Review the first 90 days: Instagram Insights, ad performance (CPC, CPM, conversions), Shopify sales, and email open rates. Refine based on what is working.

Success Metrics to Track Against

Numbers keep the plan honest. The targets below are starting benchmarks for a solo barber building from an established local base, not hard guarantees. Review them at the 90-day mark and adjust.

Metric	30-Day Target	90-Day Target
Instagram followers ()	Baseline + 10 to 15%	Baseline + 30 to 50%
Combined IG + TikTok posts per week	6 to 8	8 to 10 (sustained)
Email list size	50 to 100 contacts	250 to 400 contacts
New clients from ads / social	5 to 10	20 to 40
Retail attach rate (in-chair)	Track baseline	Approach ~40% of visits
Online store orders	Soft-launch only	First 25 to 50 orders
Ad cost per new client	Establish baseline	Below ~\$15 to \$20
VIP memberships sold	0 (not yet live)	10 to 20 members

The single most important early signal is not follower count. It is whether ad and content activity produces booked appointments and product sales. Track cost per new client and retail attach rate closely, since those two numbers tell you fastest whether the spend is paying for itself.

Appendix: Key Metrics and References

Industry Data

- U.S. barbershop industry revenue: roughly \$7 billion in 2025, growing at a 9.8 percent CAGR over the prior five years (IBISWorld).
- Global barbershop market: valued at roughly \$20.1 billion in 2025 across all regions (Kentley Insights). Note: an earlier draft cited a \$120 billion by 2030 figure that could not be verified and has been corrected.
- Men's grooming products is a large global market (tens of billions of dollars), with online sales its fastest-growing channel, expanding at double-digit annual rates. Specific totals vary widely by source and methodology.
- Retail product sales contribute 15 to 20 percent of total barbershop revenue on average.
- Roughly 40 percent of in-chair clients buy a product when their barber recommends it.
- Upselling services (beard trims, facials, treatments) adds 20 to 30 percent to base chair revenue.

Social Media Benchmarks

- Instagram's 2026 algorithm uses an Originality Score that penalizes watermarked or recycled content.
- Saves, shares, and DM shares are the top-weighted engagement signals in 2026.
- About 75 percent of Instagram engagement happens within the first 24 hours, with peak momentum in the first three to four.
- Posts that earn strong engagement in the first 30 to 60 minutes get extended algorithmic reach.
- Best content types for discovery: Reels first, then carousels, then static images.
- Recommended posting frequency: three to five feed posts a week plus one to two Stories a day (Buffer, Adam Mosseri).
- Wednesday and Thursday are the highest-engagement days across most studies (Buffer, RecurPost, Hootsuite).

Advertising Benchmarks

- Facebook average CPC around \$0.87, average CPM around \$16 (November 2025, Shopify).
- Instagram average CPC \$0.40 to \$2.00, average CPM \$5 to \$10 (multiple 2025 sources).
- Recommended minimum monthly ad spend for learning and optimization: \$300 or more (Meta).
- Q1 (January to March) has the lowest ad costs, Q4 (November to December) the highest due to holiday competition.

- Reels ads generate 20 to 25 percent higher engagement than static feed ads, at slightly higher CPMs.
- Retargeting campaigns typically deliver lower CPC and higher conversion rates than cold audiences.

*Prepared for the barber the barbershop | Folsom, CA
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