

OWN your ONLY

Master Your Marketplace With a Single Word

What makes your garden center different? That's an especially important question at a time when competition has never been keener. It's never been easier to get elsewhere the products and services that your center offers.

Google "garden centers in Denver," for example, and 6,450,000 listings show up in a nanosecond. What's it take to stand out and get heard above the noise in an era when, every day, 294 billion emails, 1 billion Facebook posts and 250 million tweets are transmitted?

What's it take to grab the attention of a customer who each day is subjected to an average of 1,250 sales messages and ponders 60,000 thoughts?

It takes one word. It's a word with which you can make an instant impact, dramatically differentiate your company and make yourselves memorable.

The word is "only."

No other word so effectively sets your garden center apart. Your "only" is your million dollar marketing and branding word.

Only is the word. Identifying yours is the challenge.

Pick Your Phrase That Pays

Is yours the area's only independent garden center that offers a garden rewards program? That uses a phone app to keep customers up to date? That offers gourmet food items? That provides online webinars and classes?

The horticulture industry offers ample opportunities for "only" statements.

Tell them what only you do, and they will buy only from you.

I spoke recently to a group of garden centers whose members included Heights Plant Farm, "Houston's only drive-through nursery," and Ken Mathews Garden Center, "the only purely home landscape-oriented garden center in Tidewater, Virginia."

A Web search will provide you with information



The horticulture industry offers ample opportunities for "only" statements. Tell them what only you do, and they will buy only from you.

about McNaughton's Garden Center, the "only garden center in Somers Point, N.J.," and Riverfront Landscaping, "Middle Georgia's only full-service garden center."

Then there's King Lawn & Garden Center (King, N.C.), the area's only \$1 million dealer of outdoor power equipment, and Mayo Garden, the "only 'Weber Alliance' dealership" in the Knoxville, Tenn. market.

Look further, and you'll come across the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden, "the only botanic

garden in the United States built on reclaimed land." And you'll discover that Monrovia is "the only grower of premium ornamentals in the world that custom blends 42 different soil mixes."

I'm helping a client roll out a marketing campaign identifying his business as "the only central California nursery with such a large selection of drought-resistant plants."

Only is not the only word with which you can differentiate your garden center, of course. "Largest" works, as in "Homestead Gardens is

MARKETING

the largest enclosed garden center in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C., metropolitan areas."

And so does "first," as in "West Star Farm is Madison's first exclusively organic garden center."

My own Victory Vocabulary includes 75 words, from "award-winning" to "unique," that garden center owners and other retailers can use to stand out. But the most powerful of these is "only."

Create your phrase that pays by completing this sentence: "We're the area's only garden center that _____."

Some clues on how to finish that sentence:

"...is located in_____."

"...specializes in_____."

"...sells _____."

"...offers such services as_____."

"...has been in business for_____."

"...has won awards for_____."

"...has a staff with _____ years collective experience."

"...is affiliated with_____."

Your "only" phrase won't have much impact, of course, if you're the only one who knows about it. That's why you should include that phrase in all of your promotion — from your social media profiles to your marketing materials, from your email signature to your voicemail ("Welcome to ABC, the area's only garden center that...").

And you should include your "only" statement throughout your website, particularly on the home page.

That will help you capture attention in a space where the attention span is brief. The average visit to a website today is only four seconds, and two clicks, and 50 percent of your website visitors never get beyond the home page.

Only Boosts Sales

It was a random comment following one of my presentations years ago that got me involved in the horticulture industry.

I was on tour in Atlanta promoting the book "Confessions of Shameless Self Promoters," and a member of the audience approached me.

"Pretty good speech," he said. "Too bad nothing you said really applies to me."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Well, I'm only a landscape guy. I'm not a marketing person," he said.

"You need to reword that," I responded. "Don't tell me you're 'only a landscape guy.' Begin that sentence by saying: 'I'm the only landscape guy in my area who...'"

His misuse of the million dollar marketing word "only" was my first clue that professionals in the industry tend to undersell themselves.

What's it take for an independent garden center to beat the box stores and master its marketplace?

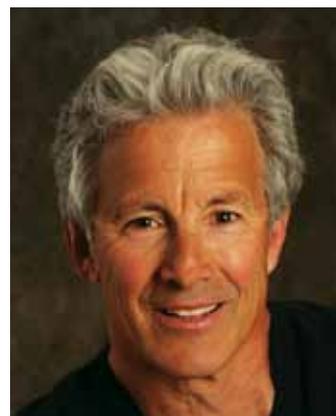
For starters, it takes outstanding customer service, savvy marketing, attention to detail and sound business practices.

But it also takes that word that wows: only.

Your only is your ultimate differentiator. It's your credibility creator and your price and fee justifier. It's your buzz builder — and it's your brand.

Promote your only as if your garden center's sales and profits and future depend upon it. Because they do.

If differentiating your garden center in these highly competitive times is your problem, your only will help you solve it. **LGR**



Fred Berns is the only award-winning personal branding coach, copy writer and speaker who creates bios, website and social media copy, and articles for garden center professionals worldwide. He's the author of "Sell Yourself! 501 Ways to Get Them to Buy from YOU," and other learning tools. Visit www.whatsyouronly.com, or contact him at Fred@FredBerns.com or 303.589.3013.

100% NATURAL
Volcanic Rock
featherrock
Boulders and Planters

Treasure from the
High Sierra

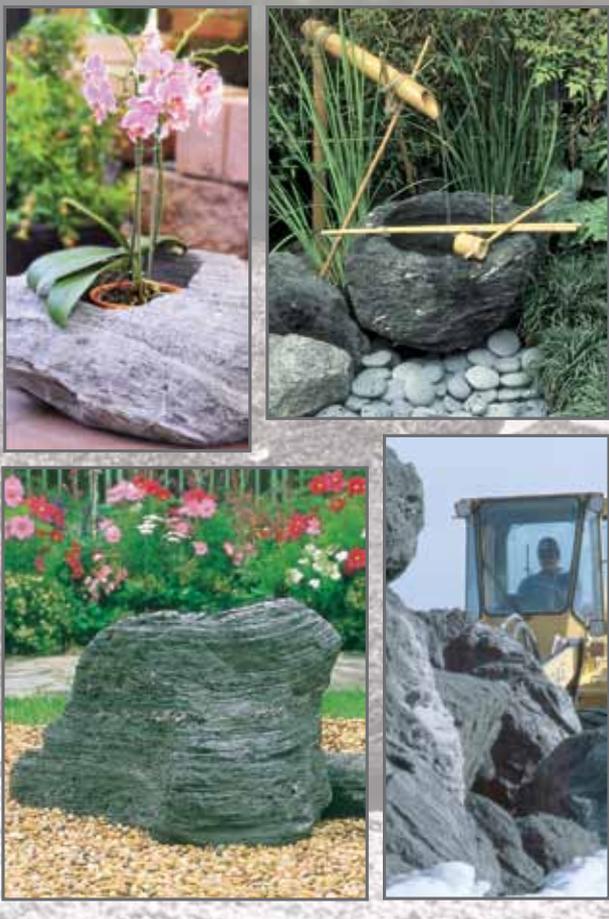
So light you don't
need heavy rigs to lift,
haul and place.



Ask about our
display-ready pallets!

Featherrock, Inc.

CORP. OFFICE: 20219 Bahama Street
Chatsworth, CA 91311
800.423.3037 * fax 818.882.9643
www.featherrock.com
email: Sales@Featherrock.com
760.647.6535



Write in 811

Tranquil Décor

Water
features
made
simple.



EasyPro
pond products

Tranquil Décor fountains and bubblers are available individually or as complete kits with everything DIY's need for an easy to install water feature at an attractive price point.

Call 800-448-3873 or go to www.easyppondproducts.com keyword "tranquil" for more information on Tranquil Décor or to request a full color 2014 EasyPro catalog.

Write in 810