



Quick & Easy MARKETING SOLUTIONS FOR GARDEN CENTERS

By Joe Tacosik

Marketing experts offer tips to help your retail location stand out.

When it comes to helping your garden center stand out in the crowded retail industry, a well thought-out marketing strategy and proper execution can be what sets the good retailers apart from the great. And if you're looking to improve your garden center's marketing efforts, there are a few quick, easy things you can do right now to help improve your visibility.

Updating Your Brand Identity

One area that many businesses can improve their marketing is by making sure they are presenting a proper brand identity. Your brand identity is considered to be all the visible elements of your brand — think color, design, logo and signage — that help identify and distinguish your brand in a customer's mind.

Many businesses, especially those that have been around for decades, may have a mixed brand identity, e.g., some social media channels show old logos, while using new logos on their website.

By taking the time to ensure your brand identity is streamlined across all of your touchpoints with customers — including social media, email marketing, website and various business listings — you are providing

them with the important benefit of making your brand recognizable. With a streamlined brand identity, customers immediately identify a certain color, shape or logo with your company, making it easier to connect with your company and separating you from other retailers.

Improving Your Website

In the digital age, it's not just local retailers that you are competing with, but also national brick-and-mortar and online chains. Companies of all sizes are using search engine optimization (SEO) on their online stores to move up in Google's search results in an attempt to acquire more customers.

If your website is outdated, with poor design and inaccurate information, you could not only be missing out on sales now, but hurting your chances to acquire future customers as well.

Some simple steps business owners can take right now include updating the website's information — such as hours, sale information, location information and more — to ensure you're providing your customers with the most accurate information.

Another way to help your website is to make sure the design is updated to reflect the same logos and branding,

and keeping a streamlined look with your social media channels, as previously mentioned.

Finally, you can do some work on your SEO presence to help move your website up in Google's search results. Some of the small changes to make right away are including your company's story directly on the home page, considering adding a blog (and updating it regularly with fresh information and customer-oriented topics) and including great, high-quality photography throughout the website.

Making Social Media Adjustments

If your company isn't currently using social media, setting up the appropriate social media channels for your business should be a high priority.

Nearly 42% of the world's population — or roughly 3.2 billion people — are active on social media each and every day, and that number is constantly growing. Furthermore, according to GlobalWebIndex, over 54% of consumers will browse a company's social media to research products or services before making a purchase.

All of your social media channels should have a single, streamlined

look — with matching profile pictures (which should just be a company logo), similar cover photos (for Facebook and Twitter) and similar company descriptions and categories across all platforms. By using a single brand identity, your company is recognizable by customers on any platform, eliminating any potential confusion over official company profiles.

Once you optimize your profiles, it's time for content. A great way to get customers — and potential customers — engaging right away is to interact with them by responding in a timely manner to comments, inquiries and messages on any channel. When producing content, your first thought should always be making sure you're sharing what customers want to see and information they might be looking for. Social media is also a great place to promote deals, exclusive products, coupons and more.

Email Marketing

Email marketing is a nearly unmatched way to help increase your business' exposure. Over 99% of customers open their email at least once a day, according to the popular marketing company HubSpot. But even more than just increasing exposure, email marketing gives you company new ways to present your customers with different purchasing opportunities.

There are a variety of email marketing platforms that you can set up in just minutes and easily implement into your company's website, including MailChimp, Klaviyo, and Constant Contact. Almost all of these platforms offer easy setup, customizable options and drag-and-drop email template editors.

Once your email marketing is set up, the various platforms give you an opportunity to get creative and help incentivize your customers to shop with your business. On your website, for example, you can offer your customers exclusive coupons in exchange for signing up for your email distribution list. Using emails to send offers on special product releases, coupons and exclusive deals are another great way to use your email marketing strategies.

Be Informative

One of the most important — and underrated — content tips a business can use today is to create and share informative content with their customers. Having a blog isn't just a benefit for your company's SEO — it can also help in providing thought-provoking content to your customers. A garden center can use a blog on their website to share gardening or landscaping tips and techniques; this is a great way to not only drive customers to your website, but to establish your store as an expert.

You can also use email marketing the same way you use a company blog. By sending out weekly or monthly emails with the latest blogs on your website, news from around your business, or even industry information, you can connect with your customers on an informative level — continuing to establish credibility and drive more potential customers to your website.

On social media, posts that contain an informative video (rather than just a promotional post) see an average of 48% more engagement and interaction. Using videos across your social media platforms to share the same information given in the examples above can be a great way to drive traffic and engagement.

Creativity and engagement are the name of the game across all of the digital marketing channels in almost every industry, especially retail. And by just implementing even one of the items above, it can go a long way in helping increase your business' visibility to customers online. 🌿

Joe Tacosik is a content marketing specialist with SmartSolutions, a partner to Lawn & Garden Retailer. At SmartSolutions and L&GR, we are passionate about utilizing the power of communication to bring people and businesses together — and we are equally as passionate about your story.

Our team of expert marketers brings its unique perspectives and diverse experiences together to provide a one-stop, full-service marketing solution to help your business thrive. For more information on how your company could benefit from an email marketing strategy, contact us at 616.520.2135 or www.smartsolutions.media.



The Knock Out® Family of Roses is celebrating 20 years by adding another member to the family! Petite Knock Out® has the same flowering ability and easy maintenance as the original Knock Out®, now in a revolutionary, petite size. Its unique, compact habit is perfect for impulse retail sales and for planting in the landscape or in a container. Petite Knock Out® is simply impossible not to love!

www.KnockOutRoses.com

