

"Make your marketing different, because how can you expect a prospect or client to notice your marketing if you're doing the same things everyone else is doing?"



## Marketing is a science

**M**arketing is a science, and don't let anybody tell you otherwise. Just like other sciences, marketing is confusing and many theories surround it. But there are specific marketing processes successful companies follow, and the process our company, Grunder Landscaping Co., follows has produced tremendous results.

All of our company's marketing must be at least two of the following three things: fun, cheap and/or different. Let me explain.

### Have a ball

In many ways, our marketing is fun. Many times, humor makes customers take notice, and your team will like it, too. One Christmas, we dressed an employee as Santa Claus and drove to 50 of our best clients' homes to hand out small gifts and candy for the kids. Many people saw it, and the local paper even put a picture of our Santa on the front page. I had fun, my employees had fun, our clients had fun, and we received tremendous exposure.

### Don't spend a lot

According to ALCA's Operating Cost Study, the average landscape professional spends about .8% of sales on marketing. For a \$500,000 firm, that's \$4,000. Most firms have an expensive yellow page ad which eats up most of that \$4,000. Contractors think they cannot afford to do much more than that. The truth is, you probably can afford to do more. Nonetheless, you have to be creative with both your ideas and financing.

In my opinion, a newsletter is the most cost effective marketing endeavor there is. Our newsletter is a simple two-page informational piece, but it represents market-

ing. We mail it four times a year, and, since it has worked so well, we're considering mailing it six times per year. You should be able to produce, print and mail 1,000 newsletters for less than \$1,000 each time. Your newsletter should have the company president's picture on it and testimonials from happy clients. It's also wise to feature your employees in the newsletter so clients and prospects know your company is about more than just you.

### Dare to be different

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I've found that many landscapers become complacent and overlook several simple, effective and different marketing efforts. I send a handwritten thank you card with a caricature of me on the front holding a pitchfork to every one of my clients. The few companies that send out thank you cards mail those generic pre-printed ones you can buy at the office supply mega store. The fact that you write one will make your clients realize you value their business and you'd appreciate more. Customizing your card and including a handwritten message will make it stand out.

The "fun, cheap and different" marketing strategy has worked well for us for years, and it will work for you — but you have to do it. Now start marketing in fun, cheap and different ways.

*Marty Grunder is the founder and president of Grunder Landscaping Co., a national award-winning company in Dayton, OH with annual sales of more than \$2.4 million. He is also founder of The Winner's Circle, a consulting company offering expert help in management, marketing, and motivation. Contact Marty by calling (937) 847-9944 or via the web at [www.grunderswinnerscircle.com](http://www.grunderswinnerscircle.com).*