



Want to grow on the cheap? Better leverage customers' e-mails.

According to a July 2009 *Landscape Management* survey with 170 respondents, just 30% of landscapers know the e-mail addresses of even three-quarters of their customers. Very few landscapers know — and use — the e-mail addresses of all of their customers who have them.

This is both a tremendous opportunity and threat: We must better obtain and use our customers' e-mail addresses, today, to enhance sales and service, or our tech-savvy competitors will spirit them away tomorrow.

As outlined in our cover story beginning on page 8, three-quarters of landscapers report their digital marketing efforts deliver returns on investments superior to those reaped from local newspaper, radio, TV or telephone directory ads. We know digital marketing works. We just have to work it better.

E-mailing customers information of value is not spam; it's sound digital marketing. Give customers a good reason to open your e-mails, and an easy out (unsubscribe option), and you will protect and build your business rapidly and cost effectively.

Here are 12 quick e-mail marketing tips:

1. Mine for gold — Call each customer and ask what types of information he or she is open to receiving in monthly e-mails. Examples include special promotions, tips on lawn and landscape maintenance, and ways to save water and money.

2. Dig deeper — Repeat the previous step with prospects and former customers.

3. Plan your work — Create a monthly e-mail marketing campaign that marries customers' digital information wants with your company's sales needs.

4. Work your plan — E-mail customers and prospects information of value every month.

5. Grade yourself — Measure the return on investment of each e-mail marketing campaign.

6. Grow or go — Duplicate your successes and improve upon, or discard, your failures.

7. Reality check — Send customers quarterly satisfaction surveys. Surprisingly, just 21% of landscapers currently do this even annually.

8. Internal intel — Leverage these surveys to identify and reward employees who exceed customers' expectations and create new, repeatable best practices.

9. Boost retention — Give disgruntled customers an opportunity to rant. Better to hear the bad news now than after you've lost this and other business.

10. Reap referrals — Reward your raving fans for sharing the names, phone numbers and e-mails of a few homeowners or businesses that could use your services. Give customers a 10% discount for one year for each referral that results in a new customer. Cap the maximum annual referrals incentive to 50%, and mark up new referred clients' fees 10% to cover the program. In the second year, you'll be giving yourself an automatic 10% raise without touching the referred customer's pricing.

11. Upsell services — Half of landscape contractors are not e-mailing clients to identify, and capitalize, on opportunities to upsell. In your e-mails, let customers know everything you offer, and give them a reason (discount) to add new services.

12. Keep at it — Continuously repeat steps 1-11.

If you don't know, and regularly leverage, your customers' e-mail addresses, then you don't really know them, yourself or your growth potential. Got e-mail?

Obtain and **use your customers' e-mail addresses** to enhance sales today — **before your competitor does.**