



A season for growth

I'm your typical lawn care and landscape customer.

The weather starts to warm up even 10 degrees in Cleveland, OH, after months of bitter cold, and I get the bug — the landscape bug.

It starts out small at first — just an itch. I take a walk around my yard and assess the winter damage. I notice the mole tracks running rampant through one side of the lawn, along with the thick, matted, straw-looking patches — a result of heavy snow. I nearly reach for the rake to start breaking it up, which my lawn care service provider recommends I do before coming out to perform the first treatment of the season, but the turf still squishes under my feet so I wait.

I keep walking. The problematic ice storms we had in Ohio this year pretty badly affected one of my front yard trees — a 'Skyrocket' juniper. I tilt my head as it leans slightly left realizing I'll have to do something to get it growing strong and straight again soon. My 'Wine & Roses' weigelas are overgrown. I'm dying to get out the pruners, but the small piles of snow yet to melt remind me to be patient — not to mention the furrowed brows of my husband as he can practically see the light bulbs blaze over my head as the project ideas start to form.

I take a deep breath and check the mailbox. Nothing. Just some bills.

About a month later, my mailbox is flooded

with postcards and fliers from the local lawn care and landscape companies looking for my business. At this point, my landscape bug is in full force, my juniper is straight, my weigelas are pruned, my lawn is raked and my lawn care service provider is expected to apply the initial fertilizer and pre-emergent treatment within the week. My plans are in place. My mind is made up on a majority of my landscape needs and concerns.

Simply stated, if you put a flier in my mailbox that week, you lost my business.

Not only were you late, but your direct mail pieces were identical. You didn't tell me anything I didn't know. You didn't change my mind or convince me to add a new project to my agenda. You became — sorry to say — junk mail.

Everyday in every field, there is room for improvement. This industry is full of companies that can mow and edge turf, fertilize lawns and prune branches. And they do it well. They do it with a precision — and tools — my neighbors envy. But how many companies offer true landscape management services? Consultation beyond the typical mow-and-blow, build-and-go business? An account manager who might have driven by, noticed my leaning tree and suggested a solution, in addition to telling me how to prevent the problem next year, could have secured a client for life.

In the pages of *Landscape Management*, we bring you best practices advice from your peers on how you can take your business to the next level. With the largest and only experienced editorial team in the industry, we strive everyday to drive smarter solutions for a growing industry.

I know ... after 12 years in the industry I may be a bit more educated than your typical customer, which makes me a tougher one, no doubt. But it also makes me a great sounding board. Think you have an idea to take your business and the industry to the next level? Or a service that would tempt even the pickiest of customers? Give me a call. We'd love to share your success stories.

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