

APP-ORTUNITY

The number of mobile users across various platforms and devices is staggering, says Rob Palmer, president and CEO of Weed Pro.

Consider this: In 2012, the U.S. saw a 55 percent increase in smartphone subscriptions to make for 98 million smartphone subscribers, according to comScore. That's nearly 42 percent of all U.S. mobile users. On top of that, 64 percent of mobile phone time is spent on apps, Nielsen reports.

So when Palmer's techy marketing director, Shaun Canary, came to him with the idea to launch a Weed Pro mobile app, he agreed it was the right move.

"It's a bridge to the future for me," Palmer says. "If businesses don't understand customer demographics, they will lose—they're already losing," he says.

The Weed Pro app, which has been available since Oct. 1 in the Apple App Store and the Android Market (now part of Google Play), was first developed by Canary himself in July, but he worked with Cleveland-based 529 App Solutions to revamp it in August. He underestimated how difficult it would be to place the app in Apple's App Store. Working with a mobile app developer eased that process and also gives him access to a user-friendly content management system (CMS) that allows him to easily change and update the app's features without redesigning the entire application. Canary says the company spent \$700 to develop the app, not including his time. Weed Pro pays \$50 per month for access to the CMS.

The free app includes a lawn ID guide that helps users identify common weeds and pests, a feed of the firm's YouTube videos and interactive features, like the ability to take a photo of a weed in your lawn and send it to Weed Pro for identification.

Since the app had only been available for about six weeks as of press time, it was too early to measure success. Canary says, "This, like our other informative guides, was made for visitors of our website to consume, use and share. We'll track the amount of downloads we receive, and how many of those prospects we were able to nurture into customers."

continued from page 18

Palmer's committed to hosting a weekly, companywide meeting to discuss field conditions and challenges, so everyone has a unified message.

IN VS. OUT

Speaking of costs, Palmer keeps a close eye on customer acquisition costs, and that's part of the reason he's sold on inbound marketing. Marketing experts say it's 60 percent cheaper to acquire a customer with inbound tactics vs. traditional marketing. (Consider that it costs Weed Pro \$90 to \$200 to reel in a customer through direct mail.)

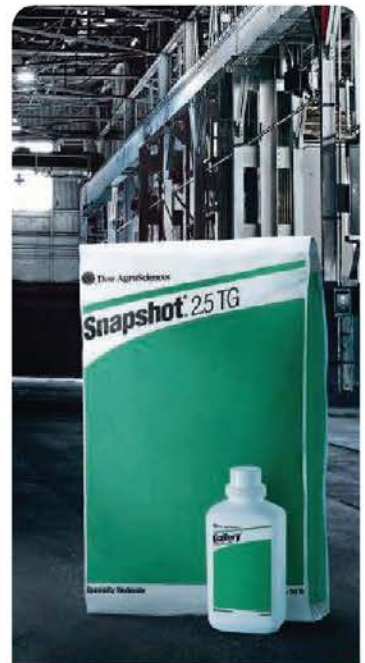
But that doesn't mean Palmer's abandoning direct mail, despite his frustration that even the best direct mail pieces end up in the trash bin, unlike well-done blog posts that will

appear in web searches year after year.

Weed Pro will spend about \$50,000 on outbound marketing, including direct mail, in 2013—which is equal to what the company will spend on inbound marketing. For 2012, the spend ratio was 60/40 outbound to inbound. Canary emphasizes that the direct mail campaigns will drive customers to the web more so than in the past.

Now that the Weed Pro inbound marketing team's in place and the rebuilding year is behind him, Palmer looks forward to 2013. "What it comes down to is we're all spreading fertilizer and we're all spraying weeds," he says. He goes on to quote author Simon Sinek, who says, "People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it."

"With our inbound content, we hope we're answering the 'why' and providing people some value upfront," he says. **LM**



With Gallery® and Snapshot®, you'll stand out even more.

Nobody offers the portfolio of turf, nursery and lawn care solutions we do. Gallery® specialty herbicide provides up to eight months of control on more than 100 broadleaf weeds without harm on 490 field-grown ornamentals, while Snapshot® specialty herbicide provides excellent plant tolerance and can be applied over the top of 636 field-grown and 487 container-grown ornamentals.

To learn more, visit www.DowProvesIt.com.

 **Dow AgroSciences**

PROVEN SOLUTIONS

® Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC. State restrictions on the sale and use of Snapshot apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details. Always read and follow label directions.

©2012 Dow AgroSciences LLC
T38-081-001 (03/12) BR 010-60782 DATOTURF1075