

"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

Marketing 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

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

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.

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industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Novartis sells FLINT line

BASEL, SWITZERLAND — Novartis Agribusiness sold its worldwide FLINT business to Bayer Crop Protection, a subsidiary of Bayer AG, for \$760 million.

Acres Group acquires Fenn

NAPERVILLE, IL — The Acres Group, northern Illinois' largest independent landscaping and snow removal company, acquired Bill Fenn Landscaping Company. With the purchase, The Acres Group increases its gross revenues to more than \$23 million a year.

Redexim acquires Pro-Seed Equipment

PITTSBURGH, PA — Redexim BV, headquartered in Zeist, Holland, acquired UK-based Pro-Seed Equipment Ltd., a manufacturer of seeders and core collectors. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Syngenta chooses office locations

GREENSBORO, NC — Syngenta AG picked Greensboro, NC as the home for its North American crop protection division, and Delaware, MD for its U.S. corporate headquarters, the Greensboro News & Record reported. Syngenta, a proposed international agribusiness company, is being formed by the merger of Zeneca Ag Products and Novartis Crop Protection. The merger is awaiting regulatory approval.

Texas equipment ban might be overturned

*OPEI proposes alternatives
to TNRCC, awaits Dec. 6
decision date*

BY JASON STAHL

ALEXANDRIA, VA — Due to recent successful meetings held between the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), OPEI is holding out hope that a proposed ban on morning use of gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment in the Houston/Galveston, TX area might be overturned.

Alternative ideas

"We're one of the few industries who they (members of TNRCC) said have come up with great alternatives, and they've said that they will swap out

problematic proposals if industries come up with alternatives," says Bill Guerry, legal counsel for OPEI. "We've gotten the ball down to the one-yard line. Now, the TNRCC needs to push it over into the end zone."

One of the alternatives OPEI has proposed is the adoption of regulations for all new portable non-spill gas cans and spouts, which has already happened in California. "We see this as a no brainer," Guerry says, citing the 20 tons of emissions reductions a day he claims spill proof containers are responsible for.

"There is very little Texas would have to do except adopt this California rule."

Another alternative OPEI has discussed with TNRCC is changing the Texas emissions model for outdoor

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CLIPPINGS



Flower power

Looking for some new flowers to spice up your customer's property? Look no further than all-america-selections.org, the Web site for All-America Selections (AAS) where you can scope out the nine 2001 All-America Selection winners.

These new flower varieties were judged to be superior to varieties currently on the market by AAS, which fosters the development, production and distribution of new and better horticultural and agricultural varieties, species, strains and kinds in and for North America. These babies are sure to grow on you!

Dot coms to swap trees for information

BOULDER, CO — Submit information, get a tree. That's the gist of a new marketing agreement between e-Greenbiz.com and Active.com aimed at helping ActiveParks.org become the Green Industry's first Web resource for park and recreation professionals and their communities.



Through the agreement, e-Greenbiz.com, an e-commerce Web site that serves the business-to-business

needs of the Green Industry, and Active.com, an online registration company, will launch a marketing campaign that encourages park and recreation professionals to submit information about their facilities to the ActiveParks.org database.

e-Greenbiz.com and Active.com will then donate and plant a tree in the city of each eligible park and recreation agency that provides information by the end of 2000.

"From NRPA's perspective, partnering with Active.com and aggregating information on all parks so the public can find out where

to recreate on a daily basis, and to have the incentive to do something hi-tech and high touch to help out the day-to-day management of park systems, is a great thing," says

Kathy Spangler, NRPA's national programs director. "We're seeing a lot more dot coms getting involved at the community level. It's unique that we can build that bridge."

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Speak your mind

Feel like putting your two cents in? The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) has formally sent proposed revisions of the 1998 Lawnmower Standard (ANSI B71.1 – 1998) to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for public review. As part of the process, ANSI requires a public review period for the revisions.

Anyone who wants to review and/or comment on the revisions should contact John F. Liskey, director of statistical and technical services, at 703/549-7600. The comment period for review ends December 18, 2000.

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Info Center

VIDEOS AND LITERATURE FOR THE GREEN INDUSTRY



Irrigation supplies... from Century Rain Aid can be found in the company's 2000-2001 supplies catalog, available free to landscape professionals. The 150-page catalog includes sprinklers, valves, controllers, low volume irrigation, pipe and fittings, electrical accessories, pumps and fountains, and outdoor lighting and water

gardening components. For a copy, register on Century's Web site at www.rainaid.com or call 800/347-4272.

Bobcat products... are featured in Worksaver, the 2000 Bobcatalog featuring big color photos of loaders, excavators and various attachments. For a free copy contact the Melroe Co. at 701/241-8700.

Tree, turf and ornamental pesticides... are listed in the Tree, Turf & Ornamental Pesticide Guide. Divided into four sections (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and growth regulators), each species is listed in alphabetical order from abelias to zinnias. Registered products are listed with data on control parameters. A new section cross references botanical names and common names. It sells for \$21. Call Thomson Publications at 559/435-2163.

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Circle 109

continued from page 14

power equipment that estimates total emissions. "What TNRCC didn't do was base the model on equipment that can reduce emissions," says Eddy Edmondson, president/CEO of the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association. Guerry agreed, saying there was new equipment on the market today that could reduce emissions that TNRCC didn't consider.

Decision due December

A final determination of OPEI's alternative proposals will be made by the TNRCC on Dec. 6, 2000. If the ban is enacted, it would become effective in the Houston/Galveston area (eight counties in the ozone non-attainment area) from April 1 through October 31, beginning April 1, 2005, from 6 a.m. until noon.

As it stands, the proposed ban would have a detrimental affect on landscape

businesses in the affected area, says Edmondson. "You'd only be able to work half a day, and you wouldn't be able to make it up on the other end," he says. "There's also the issue of starting out the work day during the heat of the day. Right now, a lot of our folks work

in the heat of the day, but they have the morning to get acclimated to it."

"The ban won't keep emissions out of the air, only shift them," Edmondson added. "All it will do is put them out in the afternoon instead of the morning."

— Jason Stahl

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How sweet it is

For the third time, Ariens Company won the Most Valuable Promoter Award for their involvement in publicizing the 2000 International Lawn, Garden and Power Equipment Expo. Ariens, Gravely and Stens planned several events throughout Expo including prize drawings, a press conference, and parts manager and service manager of the year awards. Bill Harley, president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Inc., presented the award, along with Warren Sellers and staff of Sellers Expositions.



Paul Cutler
President
Cutler Landscaping, Inc.
Tucson, Arizona

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industry almanac

People & companies

Simplex Turf and Horticulture

named Chris Claypool

senior vice president of marketing in the Jacklin Seed business unit.



The Care of Trees

hired Phil Snyder to lead its new regional office in Philadelphia, called Alpine the Care of Trees.



ern California its Region of the Year. Miramar was also named the "top performing service branch" in the nation.

Morgan Corp., Morgantown, PA, a leading truck van body manufacturer in North



America, named **Kay S. Mueller** director of sales for the southeast region.

ServiScape has been contracted by **New Lenox Community Park District**, New Lenox, IL to manage all operations and long range planning at The Sanctuary Golf Course.

TruGreen-LandCare named **Miramar Wholesale Nurseries** of South-

Riverdale Chemical Co. promoted **Sean Casey** to national sales manager and **Curtis Clark** to business development and marketing manager.

Pickseed West appointed Tom Burns vice president of international sales and market development.

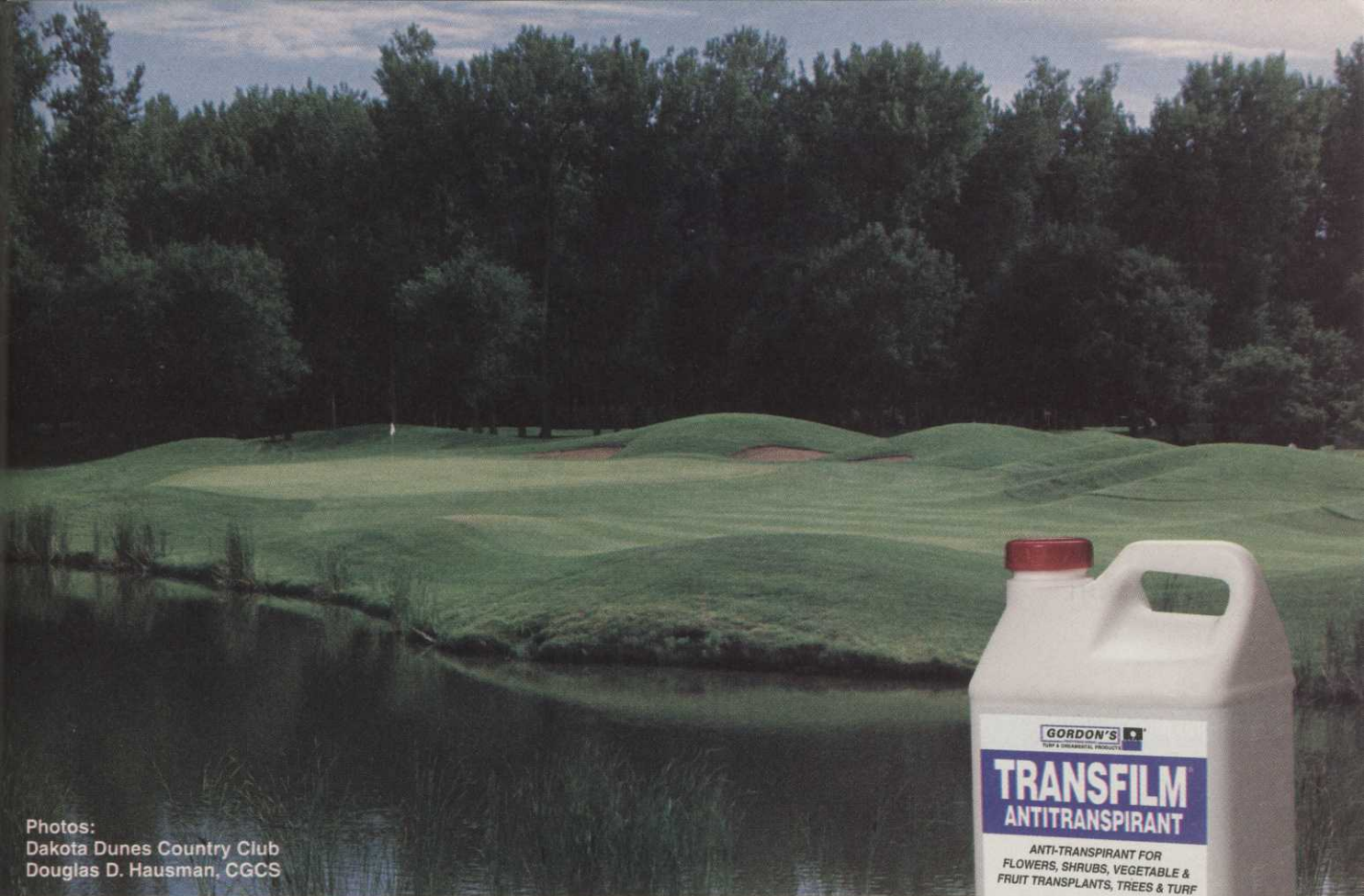
HOW LANDSCAPERS BUY

Dealers aren't obsolete by a long shot, according to our readers' methods of buying products. Here they are:

Buy from dealer	68%
Buy from distributor	67%
Buy from service vendor	35%
Buy from manufacturer	34%
Bid process	25%
Buying cooperative	12%
Buy via the Internet	10%
Buying office decides	3%
Buy on Internet auction	1%
Other	1%

SOURCE: LM 2000 READER SURVEY





Photos:
Dakota Dunes Country Club
Douglas D. Hausman, CGCS



Dependable Coverage

for Winter Greens Protection

You need protection from winter desiccation. But do you need to buy covers for all your greens? Consider the dependable coverage you can get with Transfilm.

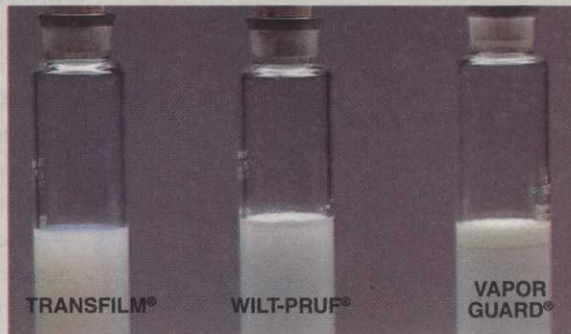


THE HARD WAY: Greens covers. Get 'em out, put 'em down (pull 'em back, put 'em back).

A single application in late fall is all it takes. Transfilm will also secure your winter fungicide application. And don't forget your shrubbery could use some protection from those drying, winter winds.



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Bruce Hunt

**Vice President, The Brickman Group, Ltd.,
Langhorne, PA**

BY JASON STAHL

Career highlights

1961

Hired by The Brickman Group

1968

Promoted to general manager

1980

Joins ALCA's Crystal Ball Committee

1980

Establishes design/build office in Philadelphia

1984

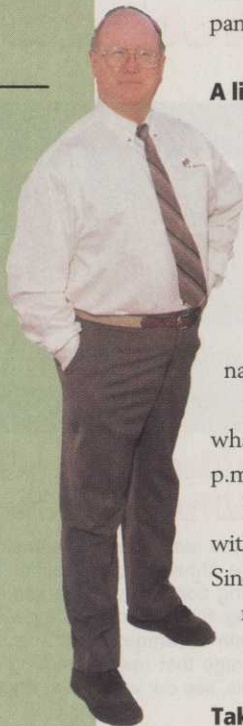
Establishes design/build office in Baltimore

1988

Elected president of ALCA

1994

Honored with ALCA's Landscape Service Award



When Bruce Hunt first arrived on the campus of Michigan State University in 1956, he didn't even realize there was such a thing as a degree in landscape architecture.

"I was more interested in business and design," Hunt says, admitting that his math skills were extremely weak but that design and drafting came easy to him.

His first interview with The Brickman Group, Ltd., happened by chance. His college roommate had scheduled an interview with the company, but had already taken another job and decided to skip it. Hunt and his wife, Cammie, who had just married in their last year of college, were planning to travel to St. Louis to visit friends, so he smelled an opportunity.

"I figured I'd take a short detour to Chicago and take my roommate's place in the interview," Hunt says.

Hunt was interviewed by Dick Brickman, and, in 1961, became one of The Brickman Group's five full-time employees. Little did he know that he would stay with the company for the rest of his career — in fact, he would eventually rise to vice president

A little bit of everything

Hunt was originally hired on as a landscape designer, but since the company was so small, he ended up performing many duties — designing, estimating, production management, supervision, and client contact, to name a few. "I've probably had every job that's ever existed in this company," Hunt says. Within five years, he became general manager, having evolved out of design and into project and people management.

Today, at 62, Hunt says he is as busy as he has ever been, but his focus is much more narrow — primarily on client development and large project sales and management.

Scott Brickman, Dick Brickman's son and president of the company, knows firsthand what kind of worker Hunt is. "He's still gets to the office at 6 a.m. and is here until 7 p.m.," he says.

Scott wasn't even born when Hunt was first interviewed — Hunt's first encounter with him was at the office, when Scott's parents brought him in shortly after he was born. Since then, Hunt has come to know him as a leader and a friend. "It was always Dick's mission to see the company grow and grow. He was a visionary," Hunt says. "Scott has taken on that ability, which is unusual in a third generation business."

Taking an active role

Hunt says Dick Brickman, a lifelong friend and mentor, was always active in Green Indus-

2000
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