

The 8 Biggest Blogging Fails of Landscape Companies



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My stepson recently bought a hammock to hang under his bunk bed. Upon bringing it home, we realized that it would not be so easily hung. I assumed its attachment would allow me to fasten support ropes around the upper frame of his bed, but instead there were specialized hooks attached to short ropes that would not even reach around the upper frame of the bed. Stepdad fail – if only I had opened the box, then I could have stopped at the hardware store on our way home. Stupid hammock.

The hammock reminds me of blogging for business. More times than not, green industry companies make assumptions and inevitably end up saying, “Stupid blog.” Turns out this whole content marketing thing doesn’t work as they assumed.

Regardless of your own hammock story, starting a blog for your green industry company has tremendous benefits. It will drastically improve your chances of being found online and will begin to generate leads for your sales team. But it doesn’t just happen. It’s not so much about the what (e.g., having a blog) as the how (e.g., strategy and execution). You have to open the box first.

Let’s take a closer look at the reasons landscape companies fail to reap a great return on their content marketing.

1. Failed titles.

Poorly written article titles are probably the biggest fail, in my opinion. Your blog articles will often rise out of FAQs you hear from prospects and customers, but it is absolutely essential that you consider keyword strategy when creating your post titles.

Remember, your company’s blog is not a broadcast that everyone is tuning into. It needs to be found in search results, and that only happens when your

titles include keyword phrases that people are actually searching for throughout the year.

If you want your article to rank for “landscape lighting Chicago,” your title of “Light Up the Night!” isn’t doing much to drive local people to convert to leads. However, a title of “7 Ways Landscape Lighting Can Transform Your Chicago Property” is going to rank higher in search results.

2. SEO fails.

Creating a winning content marketing strategy for your green industry company isn’t just about writing engaging content. There is a combination of good writing and SEO best practices. In addition to good titles, there are many other things to consider such as headings, keyword phrases within the content, image names, image alt text, the URL and meta description.

If your keywords are nowhere to be found in those items, your articles are not going to rank well.

3. Copy length fail.

This is a frequent failure I see. If you’re writing anything less than 600 words, I personally think it’s a waste of time. Recent blogging research and trends indicate that in order to consistently rank well in search results, your blog articles need to be 1,000 to 1,500 words.

In-depth articles of this length also receive more links and shares, both of which are important ranking factors. You’ll need to step up your game and go more in-depth into topics.

4. Getting an “F” in writing class.

It’s not just about the length of copy and SEO best practices. If you have any hope of getting a reader to stay engaged through 1,000-plus words, your content needs to be entertaining and informative.

Whenever I begin writing an article, I ask myself two questions:

- Who cares? (Seriously, who would really care about this?)
- How can I make this article memorable?

Let’s face it: Not everyone who is smart knows how to write, or it may be an agonizing exercise of selfdoubt. Make sure whomever writes your blog content loves the task.

5. Failure from content indigestion.

Structuring a blog post is not the same as writing a term paper or formal document. It’s important to remember that people will not like copy that is line after line of text, droning on. Use bullet points; maximize white space on the page with headings and subheadings; use small, new paragraphs; and include great images within the article. This type of formatting will help

the reader to digest your content marketing in small bites until they're full of knowledge.

6. Failing to build a content marketing team.

Only in rare circumstances will one person in your organization be able to plan and execute a great content marketing strategy. They'll most likely burn out or consistency will go right out the window.

I see this a lot when I start checking out landscaping and lawn care websites. Blog posts are ticking along at a good rate from November to March and then there is a big gap of posts until about six months (or more than a year) later.

While it's true that one person has to enthusiastically lead the charge, your management and salespeople should be blogging or at least heavily involved in the process.

The best salespeople are the best teachers and that makes them a huge asset for developing great articles. If they're too busy selling, you could hire a freelance writer or a marketing agency for your landscape or lawn care business.

7. Content distribution fails.

You should also promote your content via social media. There are easy automation tools that allow your new blog posts to publish to your company's social network profiles. Platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter also have opportunities to pay a nominal fee to promote certain posts for better visibility to your target audience.

8. Failing call-to-action.

News flash: Not everyone who comes to your website is ready to buy. Buyers go through a journey of three stages: awareness, consideration and decision.

According to Google, consumers spend more than 70 percent of their time researching before they pick up the phone or fill out a web form for a free consultation.

If your call to action is at the bottom of the marketing funnel, offering a free consultation or estimate, you will not convert the majority of visitors who are just beginning their buying journey.

While it's important to have that call to action, it's also important to have offers for the visitors who are early in the process. Offer an in-depth hiring guide, white paper, case study or even a trends report in exchange for basic contact information. This will allow you to communicate with and nurture the prospect until they're ready to request more information and, ultimately, make a buying decision.



What happens when you assume.

By the way, the hammock is working wonderfully now, despite my incorrect assumptions. It just took a second trip to the hardware store and a little bit of work.

In fact, the fasteners I bought can disconnect to move the hammock out of the way. I guess the hooks were a better idea after all, and it was more about stupid me, not the stupid hammock. Lesson learned.