

# Pull Your Marketing Weeds



Source: [www.TurfMagazine.com](http://www.TurfMagazine.com)

Grassroots marketing can be described as using your efforts to reach a small group of people in hopes that the group will spread the word about your business to others. This type of marketing can be inexpensive, but you're ultimately depending on someone else to reach a larger audience.

Is this type of marketing effective in today's technological economy? Unfortunately, social media has diminished the effectiveness of many forms of conventional marketing: print, snail mail, etc. The days are over when you could meet with a prospective client in-person or leave a friendly message and get a call right back. People are too busy and often hide behind emails, text messaging and social media. The technological world we live in today makes it more difficult to grow a business based on word-of-mouth and conventional means.

So, how do you remain in front of your audience and get your name out there when the market is flooded with all kinds of information going at light speed? Start by following these simple rules:

- 1. Pull the weeds.** What part of your marketing plan is not generating income or profit? If you are unable to identify your return on investment, it is time you start asking yourself, "Where do I need to make a change?" Every business must have a marketing plan; customers cannot know about you and your services if you do not tell them.
- 2. Find your niche or target market.** What type of people do you want to sell to and how are they influenced? You would not reach as large of an audience if you advertise your commercial landscape maintenance company in a parenting magazine over a property management magazine. Once you know where you are headed and your audience, you are ready to find the channel that will reach the most amount of people, in the least amount of time, within the budget parameters.

**3. Join the social media craze.** Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are free and almost everyone has a Facebook account. If you don't have an account set up for your business, do it now. Beware though; make sure it is professional and try to stay away from controversial topics like religion and politics. Join groups, try to find other businesses you want to work with, and add current clients if they agree. Offer exclusive discounts for new inquires or clients. Put up interesting YouTube videos that are appropriate and relates to the clientele you are trying to reach. Facebook also offers low-cost advertising that can reach thousands of people in a single day. You can set the daily limit, track activity and alter the ad when needed.

**4. Network, network, network.** Find local networking clubs or groups that meet once a month. Sharing business contacts can generate profitable leads. People like to work with people they know. As the saying goes, "It's not what you know, it's who you know." If you have the time, start your own group and invite friends of different occupations.

**5. Finally, do all you can to keep your name in front of clients, prospective clients and past clients.** Email marketing can be a low-cost way to reach many people with the same message quickly. iContact is a great website to use to send out newsletters or postcards about upcoming events. Monthly updates keep your name fresh in the prospects mind so when the time comes that they need your service, they immediately think of you. iContact recently added a social networking tool to help track social media messages.

The environment of marketing has changed dramatically in just the past couple years, and if we lose sight of how our clients receive messages, we can lose sight of how to grow our business. Social media is emerging as the most cost-effective way to gain revenues and decrease costs, driving up profit. Tandem Landscape Services has been able to cut its marketing budget in half by using social media and email marketing. This has increased our profit margin and allowed us to remain relevant to our target audience. The supply of landscapers has increased in the down economy causing the demand to go down. This increases the need to be attractive, current and innovative as to how we can successfully retain and expand our client base.

Lori DeRoche is co-founder of Tandem Landscape Services, Inc., in Phoenix with her father James. She holds a marketing degree from the University of Illinois. Contact her at [lorid@tandemis.com](mailto:lorid@tandemis.com).