

Understanding Feedback On Social Media



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One of the most valuable functions of social media is that it opens the door to an ongoing dialogue with your customers. On Facebook, for instance, they can react to your posts with a “like” or “love” button (among other reactions), and they can even comment on what you have to say. But how much do “likes” really matter?

Those we spoke to say they don’t really pay attention to “likes” as much as they do views. They’re a lot more interested in just reaching folks than having them like their posts.

Phelps says they pay very little attention to “likes.” They’re more interested in using it to build brand awareness. She adds that sometimes even high-performing posts won’t give you the results that you want, but they will give you brand awareness. Utopian had a very high-performing post that was created with the purpose of generating some response. While they had a lot of customers see the post, they got zero response.

“Our best performing post this year was a philanthropy-related post in which we were asking for nominations for the free holiday lighting we provide to someone in need or a veteran,” says Terra Phelps, president and handler for Utopian Landscapes LLC, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. “We had 61 shares and more than 14,000 views, but we didn’t get a single nomination for the contest. It was sort of like the bystander effect. Everyone probably assumed somebody else had nominated someone already. Even so, you can’t buy that kind of exposure with all of the people who saw it.”

Another key to social media is responding to customers. If they post a question or a comment on your page, it goes a long way to respond to them.

All of this effort is time consuming, and while social media may be inexpensive in terms of cost, it is definitely a time investment.

“Social media does consume a considerable amount of time,” says Glen Baisley,

marketing and customer service director for Neave Group Outdoor Solutions in Wappinger Falls, New York. "I'm working full-time on marketing for Neave but not every company has the budget for that. However, if you are growing as a company and your marketing efforts start to require more focus, you really should think about hiring someone or giving someone in your company the responsibility of handling social media."

Just be careful about your message, Baisley adds. "When you hire an outside person to handle social media, they simply don't know the company well enough to create content with your 'voice,'" he warns. "If you go that route, you must work closely together."



Chad Diller, landscape industry certified technician, ISA-certified arborist and account manager for Landscape Leadership, agrees. "Social media is such a personal message," he says. "You can pay someone to develop a strategy for you, but the posts really need to come from your voice or someone who understands your company."

At the end of the day, Diller says what really matters most with social media is your content. Your biggest effort should be dialing in on excellent material, he says.

"Think about why you follow brands outside of the green industry, and which ones stand out," Diller says. "Posting the same old 'braggy' pictures of work your company did at a golf outing or the special you're running this month are typical and ineffective. Prospects and customers aren't interested in typical and they're more concerned about themselves than your company. It's a harsh reality but one to keep in mind to have a realistic view about what you want to publish."