

Marketing session revs landscapers

Inexpensive promotional ideas from the ALCA Executive Forum

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SANIBEL ISLAND, FL — Try these inexpensive promotional items to keep your name in front of potential customers for more than a moment: packets of flower seeds and copies of this year's Farmer's Almanac.

You can buy these give-aways with your company name and logo prominently displayed. The seeds cost about 15 cents per packet and each Farmer's Almanac about \$1.35, says Green Industry business consultant Judy Guido.

This was one of many ideas that Guido rattled off in machine gun fashion during her way-too-short marketing presentation here on Feb. 15. Guido walked...umm, make that raced about 150 landscape company owners and managers through the ABCs of developing a marketing plan during a two-hour presentation at this year's [Associated Landscape Contractors of America](#) (ALCA) Executive Forum here.

A marketing plan? Yes, your landscape and/or lawn care company should have a strategy to keep your name in front of clients and potential clients, to promote your services and to differentiate your company from the competition, emphasized Guido. This plan is crucial to defining and creating your distinctive "brand," she explained.

A marketing plan for a landscape/lawn care company doesn't have to be elaborate. Most companies can build a solid plan in six or eight pages, with several of the pages devoted to defining your business and its services, said Guido. It should also critique your top three or four competitors.

Why do you need marketing? Here are 10 compelling reasons, although there are more:

- Name recognition
- Build credibility
- Establish your company as the expert
- Project a positive identity
- Inform and educate the public
- Generate sales leads
- Create new business opportunities
- Increase profits
- Strategic focus
- Customer analysis

"Marketing is not advertising," Guido emphasized. Advertising is just one small part of marketing, which is a more detailed look at your own company, the competition, the marketplace and the opportunities contained within that marketplace.

This past December, Guido partnered with fellow Green Industry consultant Kevin Kehoe to form [KehoeGuido](#). Guido can be reached via e-mail at jguido@kehoeguido.com.