

Idea Exchange March 2010

Tuesday, March 9, 2010

Strategic Planning Can Teach Old Dogs New Tricks

In most small businesses the owner does all the planning, so he or she must focus more on tactical planning (short term, like today), with little attention paid to strategic planning (tomorrow and the next 3-5 years), wrote Mark Krupka, president of the National Association of Pond Professionals. Nowhere is this more evident than during a slow economy when adaptability proves key to survival.

This past year provided a good example of this phenomenon. Many water feature businesses moved into pond maintenance and reported turning away customers. This demonstrated the potential in that market segment.

Other pond businesses, especially in the irrigation industry, laid off employees and closed down because traditional business remained slow. These businesses chose not to venture into maintenance, even though others in the industry tried to convince them of the opportunities there.

Perspective drawings can help clients visualize the plan by putting themselves inside the picture. (Courtesy of GreenSceneLandscapes.com, Fetch-A-Sketch.com and PoolRenderings.com) Perspective Drawings Might Improve Business

Scott Cohen, owner of The Green Scene in Canoga Park, Calif., recommended that landscape and building professionals use perspective drawings (needs illustration, possible explanation) to enhance their portfolios, create winning presentations and boost sales. Because clients often need help visualizing a plan accurately, perspective drawings allow them to put themselves into the picture. It also ensures a consistent concept from design through completion.

Increase Sales, Traffic by Thinking Like a Kid

Retailers should think like kids to build store traffic and sales, wrote Curt Dawson, vice president of sales for Droll Yankees Inc., in a recent newsletter from the Danielson, Conn.-based company. His suggestions: Invite your local Girl Scout Troup to sell their cookies on the weekends in front of or in your store. Contact the principal of your local elementary school and hold an official contest for the students to create and draw your store's unique signage and point of purchase for the upcoming season. Winners get their first names credited to the artwork that you publish, print and post in your store.

These types of ideas attract attention, increase customers (including proud parents) and build community interaction. This can result in a more positive and loyal customer base for your business.

Send Us Your Ideas!

We want your ideas about building pond and water garden businesses. You will receive \$50 for published submissions. Send your ideas (50 to 200 words) to smeyer@bowtieinc.com with Idea Exchange in the subject line.