



Marketing Munchies Podcast Transcript

Episode #12: Boomer or Bust Part 2

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Announcer: Welcome to the Marketing Munchies Podcast series hosted by Dr. Bridget Behe. Each week Bridget and her guests will share information, insights, research-based findings, and her 30 years of experience to help your horticultural business connect better with current and future customers. Now, let's join our host, Dr. Bridget Behe.

Dr. Bridget Behe: Hi, and welcome back to the Marketing Munchies Podcast. I'm Dr. Bridget Behe, your host. This week I want to continue our conversation from last week, where we talked about the four key findings from a study that we did with "Gen X" and "Gen Y." If you didn't listen to last week's podcast, what you would've heard was that consumers found that the act of gardening had mostly positive impressions, although there were some significant negatives—that it was dirty and some hard work was involved. And, consumers have ideas, very distinct ideas, about who is a gardener, and that could be a limiting view point. We also talked about that garden centers were the third most popular place to buy plants after box stores and grocery stores. Lastly, we talked about the words, risk and luck—that a lot of people use when they talk about gardening. I would encourage you, if you didn't, to go back and listen to last week's.

What I want to focus on this week, are the four marketing campaigns that we could adapt or employ to try to overcome some of those negatives. The four marketing campaigns are Helping Your Garden Grow—We Guarantee It, Grow up Gardening, We Love Where You Live Too, and How Does Your Garden Grow? Let's talk about those four key marketing campaigns, and how you might use those in your retail garden center.

Let's start with the first one: Helping Your Garden Grow—We Guarantee It. Some retailers are reluctant to offer plant guarantees, because they are concerned about being taken advantage of by some consumers. While that does happen, and you definitely need to fire those customers, I really want you to think about your guarantee policy for the coming months. What guarantees do, are to lower the perception of risk. Consumers believe that they have some recourse if something does go wrong. I've seen some very successful garden retailers talk about their guarantees—both online and in print media. I think what that does is it really helps to give consumers, particularly first-timers or newcomers, a little bit of a boost. They know that if something goes wrong, that somebody can help them. That if they're not just interested in the sale, but that the independent garden center is interested in them being successful. I definitely think this is something that you need to promote, that you need to talk about. In a future podcast, we'll explore guarantees a little bit more, but, for now, I think you should have a guarantee policy. I think it should be appropriate to the length of the plants—that the time that they're expected to be in the garden and enjoyed—you certainly don't want to have a guarantee of a year on annual plants—but maybe four weeks, eight weeks, or a season is sufficient. For perennials, trees, and shrubs, obviously, these things are expected to last much longer in the garden. Consumers are expected to have a much greater period of time of enjoyment. I would encourage

you to think about at least a year long guarantee on most of the plants that are expected to return or to stay in the garden for successive seasons.

The second marketing campaign we came up with was Growing up Gardening. This, obviously is targeted toward kids. Kids can't drive, but their parents can. Anytime you have school groups or tours where you've got youngsters coming, even simply on the weekends, to talk about growing up gardening—to talk about the fun interaction that parents and children have that grandparents and grandchildren can have. From our research, we saw that so many people were impacted by a relative one or two generations older than them, and that's how they really were inspired with gardening. We need to use this campaign to try to encourage children, especially ages, I would say, probably about 4 or 5, then through preteen to encourage them—whether it's a succulent plant, a tomato plant, lettuce, a marigold, whatever—to encourage their curiosity and to encourage their interaction with plants. We should have a dedicated space for kids to get their fingers in some potting mix. We definitely need to employ social media, with the parents' permission, having parents post images of their kids interacting with plants, so that they, too, can grow up gardening.

I've talked before a little bit about how important the word “local” is. When we look at a lot of the consumer research, the “local” card certainly trumps the “organic/sustainable” card. It's not to say that, people are going to buy “local” exclusively, but when they can, they know that their dollars invested in community businesses (businesses that are firmly rooted in the community) go much further. The third campaign we came up with was We Love Where You Live Too. Here is where I think businesses that are doing some philanthropic activities, whether you're donating flowers to a local church, whether you're donating them to a house that's being built for Habitat for Humanity, whether you're giving out flowers or packets of seeds at the 4th of July parade. Your business needs to be visible. You need to encourage people that you are a local business—that your employees are local residents. Try to keep those dollars local. Just increasing the visibility about some of the things that you're already doing in the community is a good way to begin to implement the marketing plan: We Love Where You Live Too.

Then, the last marketing campaign that we came up with was How Does Your Garden Grow? This really taps into the competitive nature of people. They like to have the first tomato, so having a contest on social media for “Who harvested the first tomato?” certainly would draw some attention and some interest. Also, thinking about other things like “what is the coolest plant that is flowering in your garden today?” or, “How are you using some of that produce?”—did you grill some of the peppers last weekend when you had friends over? Encouraging people to talk about how their garden grows, shows them that you're interested in how successful they are with their plants—even after they make that purchase. You want to interact with them. You want them to be part of your social community. You want them to share how their garden grows. This campaign is just so ideally suited for social media. Whether it's interesting roses that are flowering (hydrangeas), whether it's vegetables and herbs (and how did you use them; how did your friends enjoy them?), anytime we can talk about the enjoyment of the plants after the sale increases the visibility of horticulture in general. It can increase the visibility of your particular business. Hopefully it will bring people back for a subsequent purchase.

If you want more information on the four marketing campaigns, I'm going to put a link to the ten percent project where we had made some free imagery available and some more information about how you can adapt these four marketing campaigns for your particular retail operation. That's it for this week. Hope you'll be back again next week for more Marketing Munchies.

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Announcer: Thank you for joining us on this week's Marketing Munchies Podcast. For more information or to download the transcript of this podcast, please visit, connect-2-consumer.org. That's C-O-N-N-E-C-T, dash, the number two, dash, C-O-N-S-U-M-E-R, dot, C-O-M.