



# Tell Your Story With Simple Tools

Most shoppers linger at plant displays for only seconds.  
How will you grab and hold their attention?

By Susan McCoy

Customers rule. When it comes to beautifying their landscapes, most flock to garden centers and big box stores in search of perfect plants and flowers that promise great looks, easy care, and reflect their lifestyle. Put simply, they are looking for success in their garden.

Because most people linger at plant displays for mere seconds, you have only an instant to grab and hold their attention. To do this, you must give them what they want: big, beautiful tags full of information so they can learn about the plant, visualize what it will look like in their own garden and determine whether they will be successful with it.

Tags, labels and signage serve multiple purposes. With the changing landscape of competing space, creative tags quickly identify your brand, attract attention and even tell your story with just one look.

Whether you choose traditional stake tags, hang tags and free-standing signage or opt for high-tech hologram labels and web ties, it all boils down to capturing customer attention with passion and authenticity.

Fortunately, there are new technologies and cool ideas in creative signage, tags and labels on the market that are drawing customers in and igniting a “must-have” craving for these high profile plants.

## Get in Their Comfort Zone

Cultural information and content are essential, but it's the consumers' lust for information and the need to connect emotionally with the plant that is fundamental. Consumers want to feel comfortable with their purchase and want help making informed decisions.

“Programs can be small and still drive sales,” says Tim Kane, sales and marketing director at Prides Corner Farms and a marketing representative for American Beauties Native Plants. “Plants are an emotional sale. Through innovation, you can change the ‘feel’ of something and key that emotion into the consumer's mind, reassuring them about their future success.”

American Beauties Native Plants is a fine example of a successful brand using innovative, creative tags and signage.



*Tags that are creative, colorful and convey your unique marketing message will attract shoppers to your displays and help keep them there.*

“We've had generic native plants since the nursery opened more than 30 years ago, but it wasn't until we launched the American Beauties Native Plants brand that it truly began to catch on with the public,” says Kane.

“Cause marketing” resonates with those who identify with the mission. “Native plants are now firmly identified as plants that benefit the environment,” says Kane. “People feel good about purchasing plants that are doing something positive. The tags and signage convey key cultural information, and the NWF's Certified Wildlife Habitat program elicits an emotional response that drives them to buy.”

## Riding the Green Wave

Using the sustainability trend to position your plants makes good economic sense, too. Relatable slogans that carry through on signage, tags and labels can augment messages that connect with consumers. If your plants are drought tolerant or disease



resistant, position your brand with tags, signage and labels that boldly convey these in-demand attributes.

Costa Farms' “O<sub>2</sub> for You” campaign ([www.o2foryou.org](http://www.o2foryou.org)) is carving out a nationwide niche to educate people about the benefit of houseplants. Their bold color palette and cool graphics on their tags, signage and labels brings instant brand recognition that reinforces the message.

“O<sub>2</sub> for You” is an example of marrying a successful marketing approach with a timely message,” says Marta Maria Garcia, marketing manager of Costa Farms. “Sustainability and the green movement are entrenched in the youth culture, so we were

“Tags, like a branded pot, have become the ticket to open doors for customers to look at your plants.”

— Tim Kane, sales/marketing director, Prides Corner Farms & marketing rep for American Beauties Native Plants

“The days of a static tag hanging on a plant are over.”

— Marta Maria Garcia, marketing director for Costa Farms

looking for a short catchphrase that reaches a new generation with purchasing power. 'O<sub>2</sub> for You' was the right message for the right time to leverage the sustainable message."

### Keep it Consistent

Building consistency with mandatory tags is important for growers

and retailers. The Conard-Pyle Company, a 150-year-old nursery, recently shifted company direction to concentrate on creation, development, patenting, marketing and licensing of proprietary genetics.

"We have mandatory tags for our Knock Out and Drift roses, which establishes a consistent look at retail

and helps to verify authenticity," says Kyle McKean, Conard-Pyle's marketing manager. "The images we use on our tags are repeated in our advertising and marketing so consumers can connect what they see in stores to what they've read in a magazine or seen online."

Conard-Pyle is one of many



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growers now providing POS materials for retailer racks. Labels, signage and tags should work together to augment displays and reinforce brand recognition.

Consistency in packaging and branding leads to stronger sales. "Packaging and standout tags are important to people," says Kane. "We have more than a dozen brands and have proven that anything packaged and consistently branded results in higher sales."



### Give Them Info — Now

The fast-paced evolution of technology has big box retailers accommodating customers' demands for instant data and incorporating changes in automation labeling.

And with the advent of 2D barcodes printed on tags, the gateway to a wealth of information is at the customers' fingertips.

"With the development of smart phones and social media, it's a great time to be in the industry," says Costa Farms' Garcia. "Shoppers want a richer, more interactive experience that a simple click on a software app can provide."

In order to stay current, tags and labels need to invite the curious back to your website, where they can obtain rich content, such as photos and video.

"Consumers are encouraged to click onto our 'O<sub>2</sub> for You' website as well as our newly designed website, for additional information that includes articles, plant descriptions and videos and links to join the conversation via social media," says Garcia.



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### TAGS & LABELS

“Our packaging and website reflect our mission and core values of promoting environmental sustainability.”

— Mark Highland, president, The Organic Mechanics Soil Company

#### Your Story Matters!

How you tell your story and communicate information about your plants matters. Telling your story simply and authentically with visual punch will communicate your core values and passion for your product.

Transparency is vital throughout the entire grower-retailer-buyer experience.

“We designed our bags of organic potting soil with our catchphrase on the top, an iconic logo and our story on each bag so people can easily understand our core values,” says Mark Highland, president of the Organic Mechanics Soil Company.

The young company is growing as consumer demand for organic products and plants that benefit the environment continue to rise in popularity.

#### Bottom Line

People want beautiful plants that are easy to grow, low maintenance in line with their core values. Pretty plant displays — highlighted by appealing tags and signage with great photos and graphics — attract immediate attention and increase impulse purchases. By sharing your story with creative tools, you’ll keep your current customers happy and loyal — and attract new buyers to your brand.

And, at the end of the day, selling more plants to happy, successful customers is what it’s all about! ☑



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*The following top growers and distributors contributed their insights to this article: Costa Farms, a national grower based in Florida; The Conard-Pyle Company, a national grower and breeder in Pennsylvania; Prides Corner Farms, a regional grower based in Connecticut, and The Organic Mechanics Soil Company, a Pennsylvania-based organic potting soil manufacturer and distribution company.*

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