

An Integrated Marketing Campaign

Today, marketers in our industry have more choices than ever about how and where to promote or advertise plants at the retail level. In addition to traditional methods, such as print advertising and direct marketing, which are often outside the budgets earned through royalties, you have email marketing, web-based advertising, radio and multiple social media sites, such as Facebook.

At PlantHaven International, we're always looking for the most efficient ways to reach potential consumers, and maximize those efforts with tightly coordinated campaigns that synchronize our licensees, growers, retailers and consumers in an appropriate schedule to make sure the demand and supply meet each other accordingly. Often times we'll do our greatest consumer marketing efforts on a plant that has been in the market for a few years, rather than on a brand new variety. This gives our licensees and growers the appropriate time to trial, grow and supply the market to make sure that our consumer marketing efforts are met with a strong supply at retail.

For Kaleidoscope abelia, we partnered with BlueSkye Creative three years ago to reinvigorate consumer demand by working together with the growers and retailers in very targeted markets. We worked with the team at BlueSkye Creative to first answer these questions to build our campaign:

Who is our target audience? To maximize every dollar spent on our consumer audience, it was very important that we targeted who that audience would be so we weren't wasting our marketing funds on non-potential consumers. We selected specific regions and even zip codes that had a strong retail partner in the territory. We chose a specific age range, income level and home ownership status. We needed to find out their motivations on when and why they would buy our product, so we could plan the best marketing strategy.

What channels will most effectively reach our audience? Repetition and number of impressions are key if we're going to get our target consumer to make a purchase. We wanted to be able to hit a selection of target consumers multiple times through multiple media outlets, rather than trying to hit everyone only once with the same budget and getting fewer memorable impressions. To keep with that targeted approach, we chose to advertise with Facebook, radio and newspapers, since they can all be very customized to a very specific demographic.

What will be consistent throughout all of our channels? We worked with Delana Bennett out of San Diego because we felt she represented our target consumer and could best relate to them.

She is not a gardening expert or horticultural celebrity, but rather your average female homeowner looking for easy plants to make her home look good. We gave her all the benefits that we saw from the plant, but then let her come back to us with her message that made it even more relatable to the common homeowner. Whether we were reaching a consumer on Facebook, our website or a radio ad, we knew we needed a strong overarching identity so that a consumer would start connecting in their minds all the different impressions that they were exposed to with our campaign. We had Delana record radio commercials and our website videos. We even did photo shoots with her for social media, print ads and plant tags in the store so the look and feel was consistent throughout the marketing process.

How will we keep all teams in sync? Once our consumer campaign schedule was set, it was time to let everyone in the chain know about it so that consumer demand would be met with appropriate supply. We worked with our key partner retail locations in each territory to make sure they would have full displays of Kaleidoscope during the campaign. We placed ads in industry magazines such as GPN and Lawn & Garden Retailer months ahead of time to let the growers and retailers know of the upcoming campaign so they could be prepared. We sent press releases to garden bloggers, newspaper writers and regional magazines so they could be writing about the plant when it would actually be available in stores.

How will we track our campaign for future years? This wasn't going to be a one-year campaign, so we needed to know what worked best so we could continue focusing our efforts on those media outlets for upcoming years. Radio proved to be a great success when we could name the retailer in the commercial and then that retailer had a full display over the four-week campaign. Our social media ads were also a big hit because they are so targeted by zip code, age, sex, and a multitude of other demographics we selected for. Our Facebook fan base expanded as our audience shared our posts with their friends and posted pictures of their own Kaleidoscope purchases.

As we enter this third year of the Kaleidoscope campaign, we're seeing perceptible results and are expanding this type of campaign into other items in our portfolio. The strongest things we've learned here are to maximize our impression with the consumer by getting the most touches per dollar through multiple media outlets, to keep a very consistent identity throughout and, lastly, to communicate the schedule in detail with all of our partners in the chain so that our industry is ready to take full advantage of the renewed consumer interest in the product. 



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