

Using Property Layout to Make a Sale in the South Florida Nursery Industry¹

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Introduction

Making a good impression is very important in today's nursery industry. In south Florida, as elsewhere, good impressions create sales and customers. A sales relationship begins with the first sale, so it is important to make a good first impression. The lawn maintenance business is a growing enterprise in south Florida and accounts for a large portion of the sales at south Florida nurseries. Therefore, customer-friendly properties and good customer service are vital to increasing sales and enhancing your company's relationship with existing customers and prospects (JustSell.com, 2002a). This document will illustrate how to increase nursery sales through ideas such as customer-friendly property layouts, amenities, and cashier placement.

Property Layout

Property layout considerations include landscaping, roads and paths, and loading areas.

Landscaping

What is your first impression when you enter through the gate? An entrance that projects your nursery as being high quality and professional can help ensure that a prospective customer will further explore your business. Are the plants in the landscape areas the same plants that you sell? How are the entrance and bordering properties landscaped and maintained? By having representative landscapes that boast all of the plants grown in your nursery, customers can mentally construct their own layouts from these landscape examples. Because lawn maintenance companies make their money and spend their time day-after-day maintaining similar landscapes, they quickly recognize landscapes that are well maintained and those that are not. Why would anyone want to buy from a nursery that is poorly maintained?

Another aspect that helps to increase sales through good landscaping is the concept of the passerby. When an individual passes your nursery on his daily commute, whether affiliated with lawn maintenance firms or not, he will constantly see your property. Remember, you only have one chance to

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make a first impression. Good landscaping can boost sales and attract customers.

After you drive through the gate, how is the rest of the property set up? Is the landscaping attractive? It is very important to keep the plants looking good at all times. Also, different customers have different needs. A good nursery carries a variety of plants and trees to accommodate a variety of customers. By keeping all the plants and trees looking great and having a variety from which to choose, a business can give the impression that it cares about its customers. Good property layouts should include convenient and easily accessible roads and paths.

Roads and Paths

In the lawn maintenance business, people need trucks and trailers to carry all their tools and conduct their day-to-day activities. Because these trucks and trailers are often difficult to maneuver, a nursery needs roadway layouts that have large turning areas, circular drives, and wide driveways. Designs that leave the customer backing up all the time or driving down narrow roads slow down the buying process. The ability to get in and out of a nursery quickly means more time for work and making money. The additional time saved each day can help create additional accounts. There are many ways to create a nursery that is beneficial to all customers. Thinking about the future is important when planning property layouts. People who come to your property for the first time are going to be happier if they have adequate parking and easy to maneuver roads.

Lawn maintenance people are on their feet for most of their day. Driveways, parking lots, and other paths should be properly constructed for good drainage so that customers will not get their feet and clothing wet. Sloped paths and pavement also help keep customers clean. Proper layout of interior roads on the property can be a big help to lawn maintenance crews. The ability to easily maneuver trucks and trailers around the property benefits not only the customer, but also the owner. Because time is money, it is important how efficiently you allocate assets (JustSell.com, 2002b). A good property layout makes for happy customers and reduces the likelihood of accidents. Good landscaping and accessible roadways

make it easier to load plants and trees into trucks and trailers.

Loading Areas

Loading plants and trees purchased at your local South Florida nursery can be quite a task. Having a good property layout where customers can easily load their vehicles close to the needed plant site helps speed up the loading process. Every vehicle is different, but when thought is put into the layout equation, it is easy to facilitate a large variety of vehicle sizes. An example of this is plant rows perpendicular to the road for easy loading and short carrying distance. Making it simple to load plants onto the vehicle or trailer creates less stress on all the people involved in the process, which can mean more sales. For example, would you rather park your truck by the office and carry the plants from different locations to the truck, or load the truck from different locations in the nursery? The answer should be very easy to figure out.

Dealing with plants is a dirty job no matter how hard you try to stay clean. Even though this may seem like a minor point, saving people from additional exertion and stress to their body can help business. These easy concepts can increase sales because customers can easily load their vehicles and the nursery has more time to make additional sales. Placing the plants in the right areas and keeping potential customers in mind is how successful nurseries in south Florida increase their sales. In other words, create a customer-friendly environment (JustSell.com, 2002c). South Florida nurseries are in the business of selling plants, whatever can be done to make sales increase should be taken into account when critically thinking about affecting sales revenues. Another idea that can help sales is amenities.

Amenities

Important amenities for customers at nurseries include water fountains, soda and snack machines, and public restrooms. The convenience of on-site amenities is good for business because it meets the needs of customers and boosts sales for the owners. For example, lawn maintenance crews work mainly outside where convenient amenities are often

unavailable, so having them on-site at nurseries is an important sales tool for creating additional sales, which means additional profits. Another convenience for customers involves cashier placement.

Cashier Placement

Attention to details makes happy customers. Having the cashier placed in the right place is good idea because everyone likes quick service. Having an easy, convenient checkout and a variety of payment methods, including charge accounts, is good for business. Customers want quick business transactions; they do not want to wait in long lines for service.

Conclusion

Impressions are just that: impressions. Because lawn maintenance companies have very busy day-to-day activities, they like to do business with nurseries that are fast-paced and convenient. One of the fastest ways to increase sales is to make a good impression, which requires creating advantages over the competition. This can be accomplished by having an attractive property layout, convenient amenities, and easily accessible cashiers. Good time management is also important (JustSell.com, 2002b). Successful nurseries in south Florida move lawn maintenance companies in-and-out the quickest while offering value. These nurseries are familiar with the importance of image and know how to turn a prospective client into a repeat customer.

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