

Six Essential Tips To Grow Your Lawn Care Business

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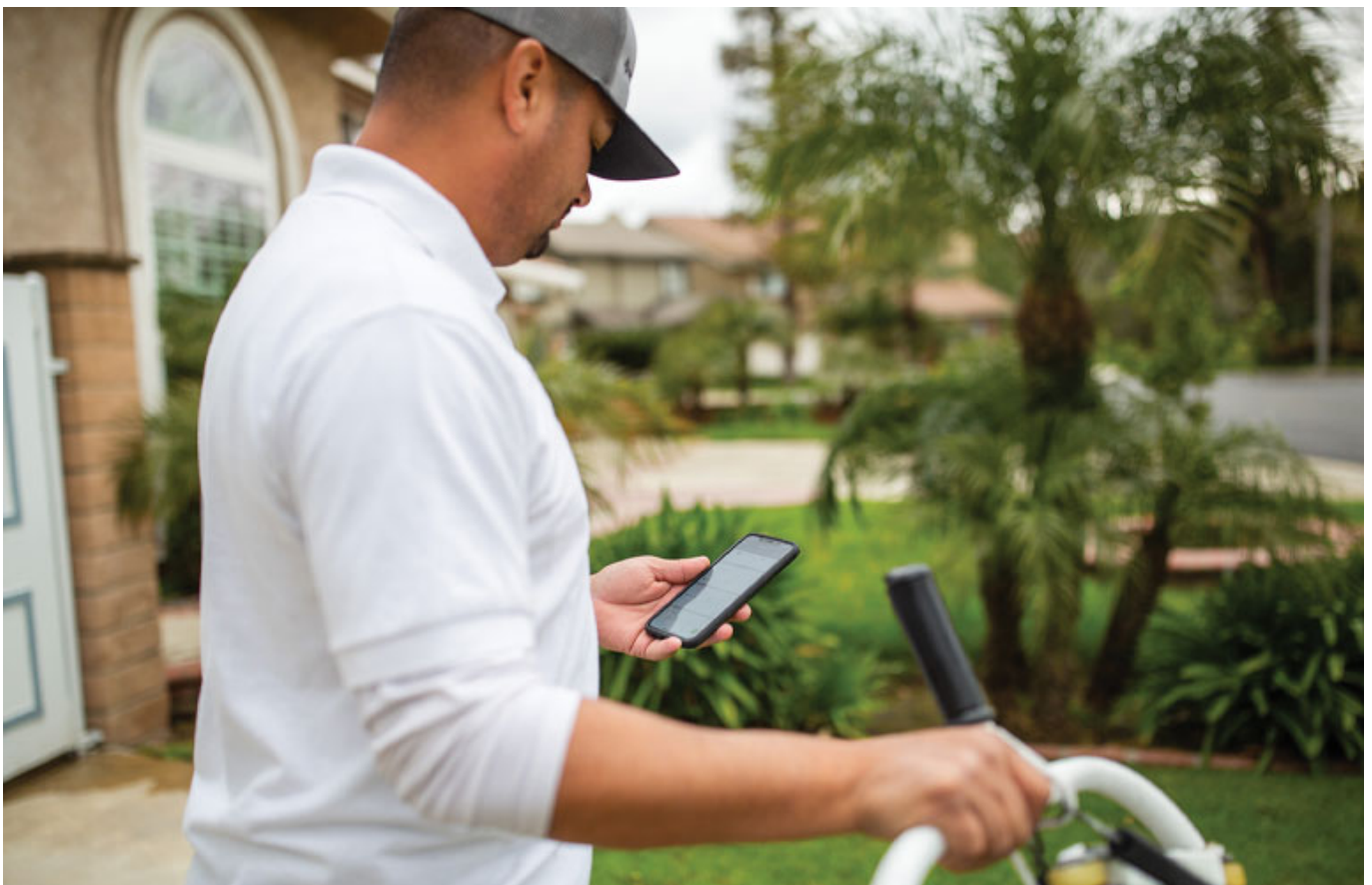
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Although providing high quality work is a must, any lawn care business owner can attest that delivering great work and staying on budget is not enough to get ahead in this increasingly competitive market. This article will discuss six business tips for lawn care pros that will help their businesses grow, while standing out from the crowd.



(Photo: Jobber)



Tip #1: Understand What Homeowners Want

According to a [2017 Cone Communications CSR Study](#), 88% of millennials will be more loyal to a company that supports social or environmental issues, and 92% are more likely to trust a company that supports these issues. This means that consumers are looking for companies that make environmentally sound decisions. This standard even applies to sourcing landscaping companies to tend to their lawns.

For lawn companies that have been in business for many years, it's important to make small changes to increase your green business practices. The market for green lawn care is becoming larger than ever, especially in big city markets. Some lawn care professionals are making the shift to using more battery equipment and smaller mowers, as well as offering new services, such as full organic lawn treatment programs. Small changes can also show a commitment to the increasing emphasis that homeowners are putting on environmental sustainability, such as going paperless by embracing technology or using recycled materials. There are countless ways for businesses to show their customers that they recognize them and are aligning to their needs.



Tip #2: Evaluate Efficiency

As your business grows, it's important to check in every now and then to ensure you are staying efficient by utilizing the most effective equipment and software. For example, when it comes to weed control and fertilization, you might be used to using a push spreader, but as you add more customers to your growing list, consider changing your practices to a ride-on spreader. This will make your business more efficient and effective—giving you the ability to do more lawns in a day and to take on more customers overall.

Efficiency isn't just about getting the physical part of the job done. If you rely on pen and paper for tasks like invoicing, quoting, and job tracking, it may be time to consider adopting lawn care business software. Using pen and paper to operate is not only inefficient, but may result in duplicate entries and errors. Adopting a software solution for your business can be intimidating, but it doesn't need to be. Look for software that has a reputation for being easy to use and is accessible on any device regardless of where you are—in the field, at the office, or working from home.

"I used to track all aspects of a job in an Excel spreadsheet and manually update my calendar, which I would often forget to update," says Stacey Flanagan, owner of SEF the Lawn Surgeon, based in Richmond, VA. "By utilizing a field service software that can be accessed through my phone, it's opened

many new opportunities for me. I can log customer information from anywhere at any time.” He continues, “I also used to mainly do invoicing from memory. The invoicing system that I have allows for my customers to pay online, which has been a huge selling point and helps make sure that I not only get paid, but get paid quickly for all the jobs I complete.”



Tip #3: Plan for Tomorrow

It’s easy to get stagnant in your operations and offerings. In order to stay competitive, create a five-year business plan and stick to it. The plan should focus on strategies to improve service, communication, and professionalism.

This is a strategy that Sef has seen work firsthand. “I’ve seen the lawn care industry become more saturated in my market—everybody is cutting grass now. You have to make yourself more appetizing to customers by differentiating yourself. Offering electronic invoicing, fast-quoting, automatic billing and being able to reference a full customer history has won over my customers. But it’s all the automated functionality that I provide that makes my service just another bill that customers can pay without even thinking about it, like water or power. Making the process easy keeps customers loyal.”

It’s also important to have a larger vision of what you want your company to look like in five years. It’s easy to get stuck in the daily routine and be reactionary with your business. If you have aspirations to add more employees or another crew, start asking yourself what you can do in the present to make that happen in the future. It may mean building up cash reserves, ramping up marketing efforts, or even exploring new services to offer.



Tip #4: Stay on Budget

The steady growth in the housing market will continue to encourage demand for lawn services; however, it’s projected that nearly 60% to 70% of lawn businesses are actually operating without an annual budget. A good piece of advice is to build a safety net of six months of income to cover business and personal expenses, should your business plan go awry or if there are shifts in the market that affect your revenue and profits.



Tip #5: Establish Your Online Presence

To be honest, it's too late in the game to be operating your business without an [online presence](#). If a potential customer can't find you easily via a Google search, they'll likely write you off as unprofessional or inadequate to do the job. Similarly, an online presence with a good amount of positive reviews for your business will do wonders for getting appointments.

The most important thing for a lawn care company (and small businesses as a whole) is for customers to be able to "find" you where they want and expect to find you. What does this mean? Ensure you cover the basics, such as: a Facebook page with location completed; a Google My Business account with local information and service areas provided; and strong online ratings from sites such as Yelp. By offering customers the peace of mind that you're a legitimate business, you'll attract new customers, retain existing ones, and keep your business running smoothly.



Tip #6: Attract the Right Employees

Lastly, and perhaps one of the most important aspects of owning a successful lawn care business, is having the right employees for the right jobs on a daily basis. There's a real paradigm shift being felt across all industries in virtually any type of role—whether it's seasonal or long-term: people aren't willing to stay at places where their values don't align with the company's principles.

Still, with unemployment at an all-time low of around 3.7%, most of the people you may be trying to recruit are already working as employees elsewhere. It's your job to lure them away (or keep them with you!) by offering a compelling company culture that makes your business both attractive to potential employees and rewarding to those already employed by your business.

All in all, by staying organized, putting customers first, and adopting new technology and practices, your business will be able to thrive in the current market. It's easy to get stuck in your ways, but following the tips outlined above will help set up your business for future success.

Shawn Cadeau is chief revenue officer at [Jobber](#), where he is responsible for the company's global growth strategy. He also leads Jobber's sales, marketing, and customer success teams. Jobber is a SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) platform that helps small home services businesses—including lawn care businesses—organize operations, from scheduling jobs and managing their

crews, to invoicing customers and collecting payments.

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