

Courtesy of Canadian Garden Centre & Nursery

Opportunities to jump on this year

Written by [John Stanley](#)

Feb. 12, 2010 – A new year with new opportunities for the garden industry. Last year may have been a tough year and 2010 could well be another rough year for those retailers who are not prepared to move forward and experiment with the new ways of marketing their business.

Your resolution this year should be based on how you are going to market your business in a better way, 2010 will be about marketing and using new ways to communicate to the customer

1 Are you on Facebook as a business?

A number of garden centres around the world are now using Facebook as a means of talking to their customers. This is not something that is unique to our industry; even companies such as IKEA are seeing the benefits of using Facebook to market their business. This is a means of communicating that is very cost effective and is becoming a major marketing tool as well as a social network tool. Garden centres need to get into this communications tool before it becomes too late

2 Have you got a virtual tour of your garden centre on your web page?

According to the latest research, 85 per cent of Brits go to a web page before visiting a new retailer. The consumer now expects to go to your web page and take a virtual tour around your business. You Tube linked into your webpage allows you to use this technology very easily. Again it is a low capital investment that brings your business to life on the web

3. Twitter with you customers

Twitter is also moving from being a social media tool to one being used by businesses to communicate with a sector of their consumer base. Retailers need to be experimenting now with Twitter to see if it has value in their business

4. The radio

The radio is becoming more popular and therefore more effective as a marketing tool. The reason for the increase in radio listening is the development of radio being available on smart phones. This is an opportunity for the listener to hear the latest music before they download it, and therefore an opportunity to hear your message.

5. Finally, **communicate with your customer** in the garden centre via garden classes.

I realize this is not a new idea; we have been doing garden classes in-house in garden centres over the years. But we now have a gardener who is less educated than in the past, but is keen to develop their garden and are concerned about making mistakes. Revitalize your in-house consumer training program, it is now in fashion again to learn about how to garden.

In one sentence, 2010 is about communications using new techniques.

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