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The most powerful marketing doesn't just describe an organization; it shapes how the world views it.

CASE STUDY

Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care: Seasonal Customer Newsletter Program

How a twice-yearly print newsletter transformed seasonal service awareness into a 25–35% increase in bookings — and earned a national industry award.

OVERVIEW

Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care is a premier outdoor services company serving residential and commercial customers across the Front Range of Colorado, with offices in Denver, Firestone, and Fort Collins. Swingle's service portfolio spans lawn care, tree services, pest and insect control, holiday lighting, and sprinkler winterization — each tied to a distinct seasonal window during which customer action is both urgent and time-sensitive. To keep its customer and prospect base engaged, informed, and ready to schedule, Swingle developed a twice-yearly print newsletter program: a high-quality, mailed publication delivered each spring and fall, serving as a trusted seasonal resource for Colorado homeowners and property managers.

CHALLENGE

Lawn and tree care is an inherently seasonal business — and seasonal businesses live or die by whether their customers take action at the right time. Left to their own devices, most homeowners and property managers defer property maintenance until a problem is visible, which is often too late for optimal treatment outcomes and results in compressed, unpredictable demand for Swingle's service teams.

Three compounding challenges made this customer education gap particularly costly:

- **Diverse Audience:** Swingle's customer base ranged from residential homeowners to commercial property managers — audiences with vastly different levels of horticultural knowledge, different service needs, and different motivations for engagement. A single communication had to speak meaningfully to all of them.
- **Absence of Internal Expertise:** Swingle lacked a dedicated internal resource with both the design capability and the editorial range to produce content that was simultaneously visually polished, scientifically accurate, and genuinely readable for a general audience.
- **Reactive Service Demand:** Without proactive outreach, customers booked services reactively rather than preventively — missing optimal treatment windows, creating scheduling volatility, and leaving revenue on the table that better-timed communication could have captured.

The practical consequence was a recurring seasonal gap between what Swingle's customers needed to do and what they knew to do — a gap that cost both the customer (in property outcomes) and the business (in unrealized service revenue).

SOLUTION

Recognizing both the opportunity and the internal capability gap, I conceived, wrote, designed, and produced a comprehensive seasonal newsletter program in-house. Published twice annually — in spring and fall — the newsletter was mailed directly to Swingle's customer and prospect list as a high-quality print piece that conveyed the credibility and care befitting a premium service brand. Key elements of the program included:

- **Seasonal Service Guidance:** Each edition led with a curated checklist of recommended services for the upcoming season — tree pruning, aeration, fertilization, sprinkler winterization, and more — removing the guesswork and giving customers a clear, timely action plan.
- **Timely Educational Content:** Articles addressed the seasonal issues most relevant to Front Range homeowners. The award-winning Fall 2016 edition, for example, featured in-depth coverage of the Emerald Ash Borer's spread to Longmont — a genuine public threat affecting an estimated 43,000 ash trees — complete with identification guides, treatment options, and urgency-building statistics.
- **CEO Letter:** A personal message from CEO Tom Tolkacz opened each edition, reinforcing community connection, sharing company milestones, and establishing a tone of trusted expertise and genuine care for customers.
- **Community Value-Adds:** Beyond service content, each newsletter included locally relevant additions — family event listings from Colorado partners, seasonal coupons, and exclusive offers such as a free pumpkin partnership with Rock Creek Farm — making the newsletter a welcome piece of mail rather than a marketing artifact to discard.
- **Consistent Visual Quality:** Design and layout were executed to the standard of a premium regional publication, reinforcing Swingle's positioning as a professional, detail-oriented organization whose expertise extended beyond the job site.

IMPACT

The newsletter program delivered sustained, measurable results across every edition, tracked directly by Swingle's customer service representatives through incoming service inquiries following each mailing:

25–35%
Consistent seasonal increase in service bookings per newsletter edition (depending on service line)

2x
Per year — spring and fall editions delivered to customers and prospects

TCIA
Professional Communications Award — Newsletter/Brochures, 2016

The Fall 2016 edition was recognized with a Professional Communications Award in the Newsletter/Brochures category by the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) — the leading national industry body for landscape professionals — validating both the editorial and design quality of the program. More meaningfully, the newsletter's consistent impact on seasonal service demand demonstrated that proactive, high-quality customer communication is not a marketing luxury for service organizations — it is an operational revenue driver. When customers are educated, informed, and reminded at the right moment, they act. And when they act, everyone wins.