

GREAT SCAPES COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

OVERVIEW

The Great Scapes business is seeking continual marketing opportunity to steady their focus on business needs instead. While they carry two businesses, we strive to emphasize catering to all audiences, mainly in single family homes. Great Scapes recognizes that marketing will be critical to develop a sufficiently large customer base. Great Scapes offers residential hardscape care with an eye for detail that is reliable and professional. This communications strategy outlines we will help you achieve your overall objectives and communicate effectively with your stakeholders. This plan is also flexible to accommodate any changes that need to be made.

RESEARCH

Situation:

Great Scapes is the largest installer of hardscapes and outdoor living systems in Maryland, with over 2.5 million square feet of paving stones installed to date. However, the business is faced with the significant issue of lacking a dependable marketing strategy and plan to drive growth during the winter months of November through February. Great Scapes is missing major opportunities to reach target homeowners via their website, social media channels, print campaigns, digital marketing campaigns, feature events, and promotional products. This poses a substantial gap in revenue during one-third of the total year, by failing to appeal to this portion of untapped potential clients. Great Scapes brings together the unmistakable quality of affordable hardscapes, along with the distinctive elements of luxury custom projects. With such a desired profile, Great Scapes should position both assets with a cohesive brand identity at the forefront of their marketing strategy and execution.

SWOT Analysis of Great Scapes current position in the market:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current healthy and loyal network of relationships with single-family homeowners in Maryland• Two prospective segments of viable business dependent upon community and type of home• Prominent recognition and credibility via hardscape publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of user-friendly website to easily find information• Absence of consistent marketing strategy, cohesive branding, and messaging• Shortcoming of potential opportunities via paid advertising, follow-up, referrals, and/or reviews• Business decrease during winter months

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some responsiveness from current marketing efforts (lead letters and door hangers) • Increased research to justify pricing and warranties • Strong experiential knowledge of the lawn care industry • A solid foundation with a highly desirable community of prospective customers • Low overhead • Pricing power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No current reporting method • Differentiation from landscaping • The lack of brand equity • Customization can break into landscaping
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit/ability to paving in the winter months • Active social accounts on Facebook, YouTube, Houzz, Instagram, Yelp and Pinterest • Targeting primary and secondary audiences, with a two-tiered approach • Elevated testimonials and examples of work via social channels, photography, and videography • Reaching and converting new clients through creation of a referral system • Motivating current and potential new clients by offering competitive pricing in addition to seasonal promotions • Niche opportunity to gain business through new offering of warranties, even if we did not build the project • Repeat business • Trends to outdoor living space prominent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Scapes is missing potential revenue during one-third of the year, due to lack of consistent marketing and brand awareness • Waste of time, energy, and resources regarding some pool-related projects • Hurting overall brand reputation when working with large building companies • Great Scapes is in a loss against competition, due to lack of SEO services • Text-heavy and overbearing amount of information discourages engagement on the website • Example work is published without proper credit to Great Scapes • Competition from the larger, established hardscapes • Future competition from a similar, entrepreneur-spirited individual. • Seasonal business is not sufficient to carry the business through the off-season • Economic downturn

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Great Scapes' overarching mission aims to take an undesirable area of your yard and create something that is both beautiful and functional. Great Scapes is the largest installer of

hardscapes and outdoor living systems in Maryland, offering a variety of work from outdoor kitchens to driveways.

As a local family-owned business with over 30 years of experience in the industry and area, Great Scapes has maintained strong partnerships with manufacturers and suppliers, to apply the best resources available into their work. Great Scapes' full list of hardscape services includes; patios, driveways, walkways, steps/porches, and pool decks. In addition to their Hardscape services, Great Scapes provides a wide-range of Outdoor Living services, such as; outdoor kitchens, fire pits/fire places, stone walls, pergolas, water features, and custom-build projects.

Since 1987, Great Scapes Owner, Rick Heiberger has remained passionate in helping homeowners improve the landscape of their homes, through specialized residential hardscapes and outdoor living projects. Great Scapes' success stems from their unique customer centric approach, along with quality craftsmanship and attention to detail on each of their projects.

The Great Scapes has been dedicated to their customers since 1987. The team has remained remarkably dedicated to providing the best value of their paver design and installations, such that they proudly offer a 'Paver Price Promise' to their clients. In other words, if a client receives a formal proposal from a licensed contractor for a comparable stone paver product and installation service at a lower price, Great Scapes will match that price. Great Scapes evokes a different level of confidence and assurance in their trusted partnerships with clients, which shall be upheld and maintained through future efforts.

Target Audience and Positioning:

Primary Target Audience:

- Suburban middle-class families
- Homeowners with adequate lawn space for opportunity
- Located within the DMV region
- Functionality and design is their most valued objective

Secondary Target Audience:

- Suburban upper class with substantial disposable income
- Generally resistant to economic downturns primarily because they view outdoor maintenance as a necessity
- Strong loyalty to their vendors and service providers
- Aesthetic appeal with custom advantages for design are their most valued objectives

PLANNING

Macro Goal

Reposition Great Scapes for more opportunities while emphasizing quality and affordability.

Topline Messages

- Messaging around affordability but also quality.
- Year-round care and commitment.
- Strong call to action on receiving an estimate.
- No job too big or small, we do it all.
- We help create the home of your dreams.

High Level Strategy

The goal is to move the Great Scapes into the digital age with three main components. The first being a new website and logo, where they can reach their audience for low ROI while displaying their best work.

The second is enhanced digital platforms such as social, email marketing and other digital efforts that encourages the public to understand all the services Great Scapes has/can do, and be a tool for news and information.

The third component will utilize hands on marketing with print and events. These events will be held so audiences can physically see the work Great Scapes has done. Print will play a huge factor in gorilla marketing by being hands on while engaging with both events and promotion.

Each objective will cover all the necessities to bring Great Scapes into the modern age such as: increase in business and awareness of hardscapes; increase overall visibility; increase revenue in marketable profits through website; and increase digital presence with social media and digital engagement.

The main targeted audiences would single family home owners in the DMV area who want both lower cost services, and high cost customization.

WEBSITE

The website should be generated more towards customers, and with a new and improved site we can better track who is visiting and where the weaknesses and strengths are. New sites work better on mobile devices (44% organic on mobile, 75% usage on mobile, 4/5 mobile users search customer services). Incorporating social media with a more hands on approach, such as live feed, will increased engagement. Websites are the first stop for information from the public. Great Scapes can take advantage of the latest website technology that offers users more information and easier access to website functionality.

Additionally, social media on the site will improve SEO leading to more traffic on site and allows a mobile friendly platform for sharing information. It also serves as a direct communication with audiences for better engagement and opportunity for referrals. It leads users back to the site for more information, while helping increase branding efforts. We can also respond immediately to any questions and really listen to Great Scape's audience. Social media on sites triple ROI.

Optimizing Great Scape's website to appear for search terms relevant to hardscaping, using a combination of on-site and off-site SEO efforts, would greatly increase online visibility. As part of this initial phase, we will provide a list of target keywords that strike the right balance between search volume and competition within the online landscape, while also being relevant to the on-page content. Within the first 30-45 days will be optimized for the copy and technical elements of the website to appear for the targeted keywords.

CONTENT & BRAND ASSET CREATION

Throughout each campaign, there will be website adjustments and development of brand creative by curating assets and focus on building the brand. Creating new images and video assets to be used through social platforms, will help form creative pieces for audiences to better understand hardscapes. We could implement a direct mail piece as an awareness builder, and have invitations to events. It is imperative to create an internal process that brings the campaign into the day-to-day operations by informing key personnel of campaign language and materials.

TESTIMONIALS

Testimonials and word of mouth are essential to any home improvement business. By utilizing testimonials and promoting them in email and on social, we can accomplish viral participation. On the website, we can bring forward to light the importance of these testimonials by displaying on banner and in appropriate places while also having a separate portfolio section. We can use the help of Houzz, Google business and Yelp, and other free review sites to continually grow fan base.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Being able to utilize Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest to its fullest abilities will improve user-ship and give way to the potential of users. Adding one more channel, such as Instagram, that is linked to your Facebook or Twitter would work to increase overall SEO and online exposure.

Right now there is not a consistent hashtag mentioned that fans could learn to associate with Great Scapes. Promoting a specific hashtag (in general and for each campaign or exhibit), across posts Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter helps to gain followership, loyalty, and overall brand awareness. Frequently using social channels will expose resources and having a common hashtag will show more visibility.

The rebranded content should include more personality. These types of stories also drive

conversation and motivate people to share. This means moving forward, using more photos and videos. We can accomplish this by tapping into followers’ emotions of homeownership, through documenting and emphasizing the success stories that happen within each project.

Beneficial social media practices:	Responsiveness and frequency:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuable content • Comment on relevant news/tweets • RT relevant stuff/ mention appropriately • Hashtag appropriately • Engage exponentially with commenters • Ask for RT and likes • Join the conversation and respond. • Do trendy worthy forums (multiple choice, quizzes, puzzles, quotes, lists, emoji's) • Get involved in live chats, especially in the community • Follow more people • Utilize tools for followership and analytics such as Twiends/ Ignitwit / followerwonk • Links in lots of post • Images and video heavily used in posts • Reuse content multiple times spaced out • Call users out in mentions • Use twitter cards • Facebook graph search • Make sure the Great Scapes has searchable info • Include like boxes on website and blog • Invite email contacts • Cross promote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each response on channels should be warm, friendly, and informative. • The frequency of posting will depend upon current events, but Twitter and Facebook will be at least once a day. • Pinterest will be weekly • Social will be multiple times a week with images that also incorporate more shares, likes, and mentions with Facebook/Twitter/Pinterest/YouTube/Instagram followers • Moving forward, aim to acknowledge any interactions within 24 hours



CAMPAIGNS AND TACTICS

Campaigning is all about creating content that is of real value to Great Scapes with the underlying intention of motivating customers to take a particular action. For Great Scapes, it's not about what is being sold, as much as its about they stand for. And that is to make a home more functional, welcoming, and inviting.

Campaign A: Website and brand release

Key Message: Promoting brand awareness with new launch

- Social posts
 - Create buzz/teaser ahead of time
 - Change backgrounds to hint at release
 - Invite to like/share/comment for discount
 - Invite customers to share pictures of the work done by GS with before and after photo (if possible) with incentive
- Email
 - Email pre release
 - Email launch
- Print
 - Send specialty invitation with strong call to action
- Blogging
 - Share a countdown clock
 - Blog on rebranding

Campaign B: Seasonal campaign

Key Message: We all sorts of hardscape projects year-round. Focus on benefit of 'Ready for use in the summer'.

- Print: send snowy imagery postcard
 - Door hangers with each season
- Social: champion around projects that can still be accomplished in winter months
- Infographic (used on multiple channels): Shows what we can do throughout the season
 - Winter: Start building pools
 - Spring: Pavers and outdoor kitchens
 - Summer: Pool rehab and steps/porches
 - Autumn: Fire pits and brick ovens
 - Year-round: Pavers patio, custom designs, all services
- Referral program incentive in each season targeted around season specific projects.
- Show drone work they currently use is more fitting of custom client need more footage from middle class homes.

Campaign C: Custom and affordable campaign

Key Message: Speak to other audience with message of affordability and quality. Stress customer service while showing middle class homes in images.

- Social: Projects and what their cost was promotion
 - Affordable before and after projects
- Warranty promotion (print and social)
- Email: Example of affordable projects conveying quality work.
- Team with local businesses with brochures or flyers (landscapers, pool sales, etc.)
- Blog: Speak to knowing how affordability and quality are important to any homeowner, and also mention “match price” program.

Campaign D: Show room campaign

Key Message: Create awareness on how-to’s and what special projects could mold into their homes.

- Geo-targeted national event pages and on local media websites
- Direct mail piece of invitation to these events
 - Possibly promote a BBQ
- Promotional item relevant to event (possibly BBQ set with GS logo or t-shirts)
- Secure and promote on social media
 - Video
 - Facebook live feed event
- Discount promotions:
 - Receive special discount for attending
 - Coupon advertisement
- Book appropriate date
- Send follow up thank you (hint at review or testimonial)

Campaign E: Referral program campaign

Key Message: By using a referral, you will receive a special discount

- Print door hangers to follow up with previous clients
- Send special thank you’s as follow up to existing client
- Mention on social
- Send email to previous clients as a reminder to promote to friends and family
- Ad buys and PPC

Campaign F: Outdoor kitchen campaign

Message: “Gather. Grill. Eat. All season long.” Enhance the experience of outdoor gatherings.

- Social and Blogging: Storytelling element as to why being together outside is important
- Print recipes and send them in promoted postcard
- Email: Family and friends gathering outdoors theme
- Giveaways and promos to current and prospective clients

TACTICS CAMPAIGN A EXAMPLES:

BLOG POST

Ever since Great Scapes launched 1987, we have been passionate about making your home warm and welcoming. For us, it's about family and friends. We're committed to making our values come to life in the work we do. Because of our commitment we wanted to bring our customers a refreshed look that truly reflects our work.

[insert video]

We have an unwavering commitment to quality and affordability. Great Scapes take great pride in our design, and we believe our new logo and website convey our passion. Take a look at our portfolio and follow us on social media to get ideas.

We have continued to evolve in bringing our customers the best service possible, with an increased emphasis on craftsmanship. Great Scapes has continued to share our passion and excitement for all things "hardscaped" by providing quality, timeless designs and expert guidance.

The new website is interactive and gives better examples of our work. Our current and prospective clients will find useful information about our services and recent works on the homepage.

Amongst the new features the site contains integrated social media buttons for Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, to foster improved communication with our clients. We will be constantly updating our content with helpful information, articles, blogs, newsletters, announcements and client successes in the testimonials section.

Great Scapes hopes that you view our rebrand as a commitment to our customers and that you'll know who to call when you want your outdoor space to become a part of your dream home.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Amp up your outdoor ambiance. Inspired by the love of gaming, check out one of our best custom designs! [pic of chess board]

Natural stone to bring out the best in nature? Yes please! [Image of great stone work]

Tip: Fill your newly paved patio with greenery: [Image of previously paved work]

The table is set and the food is ready! Gather your favorite people to host the best dinner. [Image of outdoor kitchen]

Stay out longer! Looking to bring some coziness to your outdoor space? We have the fire pit or brick over for you. [Image of fire pit]

Home is where one starts from. -- TSO Elliot [Outdoor home image with walkway]

Enter our contest! Did we do work on your home? Share with us what we've done to make your home better and enter for a chance to win a "X"! [show before and after picture]

EMAIL

After months of hard work, we are delighted to officially announce the launch of our new website and logo.

Our goal is to share with our customers our passion for creating your dream home.

We hope you find the new website fresh and modern; we worked hard to make sure it contains valuable information and examples.

[email contains image of great work done on affordable home. Displayed as rally cool invite with an RSVP button that leads to website]

PRINT

[Front:]
You're Invited.

[Back]
Get closer to your outdoor dream space.

We are excited to announce the unveiling of our new logo and website. The new site and logo showcases our wide array of capabilities in making your outdoor home friendly and cozy.

Check it out and connect with us to see beautiful hardscaping.

[Design layout options:

- Specialty mail piece: Displayed as stone samples on texturized postcard with “swatches” of stone examples facing a walkup or backyard.
- Simple mail piece: Postcard with stone examples on flat surface.]

EVALUATION

Great measure will be taken in ensuring the success on the Great Scapes ideals. To effectively position Great Scapes, we have developed an open, agile, and flexible strategic plan focused on unveiling Great Scapes best attributes. Each campaign will have written goals and objectives before the start of its launch.

SOCIAL

- The social media campaigns will be measured mostly through analytics and benchmarking against previous posts and other competitors. We will take a look at monitoring each channel used and utilize a comparison approach. Additionally, we will take on the listening element for what commenters are saying.
- With social measurement we can utilize a great many of tools and accomplish insightful analytics to help us improve further content and utilize best practices.
- We will monitor what the audience is saying and take “conversations” into evaluation with an algorithm that identifies words and adjectives. We will also do a comparison report to the previous year, month, or even day. We can evaluate how these posts are doing compared to “competitors”.

The profile Facebook report will include:

- Impressions
- Engagements
- Clicks
- Geographic location
- Demographics of age and gender
- Audience breakdown

The report will include this information for each post as well

Twitter profiles:

- Twitter Comparison
- Twitter Listening
- Follower interest
- Region breakdown
- Who followers follow
- Types of engagement
- Tweet length and engagement rate
- Tweet follower reach percentage
- Retweets, replies, comments
- Overview of time of day

Pinterest profile:

- Pins

- Repins
- Reach
- Number of visitors
- Clicks
- Impressions
- Contact-to-customer conversion rate

Instagram Profile:

Since Instagram is in its juvenile analytic phase, there will be much opportunity to understand this platform further. For now, we can measure success with:

- Demographics
- Location, gender, age
- This will allow us to see the expansion in the demographic portion
- Followership (and comparison with competitors)
- Individual post analytics
- Top posts
- Hashtags
- Followers who don't follow back

EMAIL:

We will take email campaigning to a new level with personalization and effective communications. Campaigns will contain effective emails to increase maximum opportunity. Deliverability of opening emails can be affected by everything from content, list quality, engagement elements, and sending reputation for better quality. Furthermore, emails are more often opened on mobile devices than any other platform and pushing for a more effective way to keep audience informed.

Email campaign success will be measured through:

- Average Stats by Industry
- Average Stats by Company Size
- Increase in open rates
- Increase in click through rates
- Decrease in bounce rates
- Forwarding rates
- Segmented open rates
- Activity of results

Additionally, some email campaigns will contain pieces such as surveys from survey monkey, or event invites from Eventbrite. Using these tools will give us a grasp of audience performance and measurable success while tracking who the message is reaching. The success will be compared to previous experience, expectation, and benchmarking. We can also see the

conversations happening around emails with the reply button.

Direct Mail

Adding a QR code or evaluate website links affiliated with specific dates, helps us gauge the response rate of your mailings. Peaks during drop dates are key indicators in measurement success.



CAMPAIGN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

		2016	2017											
TASK		Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
SOCIAL	(ongoing)													
EMAIL	(ongoing)													
CAMPAIGN A	Social													
Website and branding	Email													
	Print													
	Blog													
	Pic contest													
CAMPAIGN B	Postcard													
Seasonal	Social													
	Infographic													
CAMPAIGN C	Print													
Affordable	Social													
CAMPAIGN D	Collateral													
Show room	Social													
	Mail													
	Video													
	Event													
	Discount													
	Thank you card													
CAMPAIGN E	Print													
Referral program	Blog													
	Adbuys													
CAMPAIGN F	Print													
	Email													
Outdoor kitchen	Social													

