

MAKING CONTENT SEXY



2022

Taking lawn care from 'boring' to bold

**How Austin startup LawnStarter
seized upon World Naked Gardening Day
to generate media buzz**

By JOHN EGAN

“Content marketing can be challenging — especially when dealing with a ‘boring’ industry. The truth is that there are no boring industries, just boring content.”

— Nayomi Chibana, Visme.com

While the U.S. landscaping services industry is projected to rake in almost \$130 billion in revenue in 2022, it’s not exactly a scintillating business sector. Americans are obsessed with their lawns, but not necessarily with lawn care. Therefore, attracting media attention for a lawn care startup is a tough row to hoe.



In 2015, as editor in chief at LawnStarter, I was tasked with publishing content that would draw interest from readers and media outlets, and ultimately would generate backlinks for the LawnStarter website.

One day, as I was brainstorming content ideas, I happened to stumble upon an observance I’d never heard of — World Naked Gardening Day. It then dawned on me:

How could LawnStarter “newsjack” this holiday to garner attention for LawnStarter?

Newsjacking

Sowing the Seeds of a Plan

Once I pounced on the concept of capitalizing in some way on World Naked Gardening Day, I had to devise a way to drum up a newsworthy angle. That's when it hit me:

Why not rank the best U.S. cities for observing World Naked Gardening Day?



After settling on that idea, we had to determine which data to use to rank U.S. cities.

The six statistics we relied on (representing nearly 50 major cities) were:

1. Average high temperature.
2. Average percentage of sunshine.
3. Average rainfall.
4. Average afternoon humidity.
5. Average number of cloudy days.
6. Average wind speed.



Each of the six statistics was weighted evenly and benchmarked against these weather ideals:

- High temperature of 75 degrees.
- 100 percent sunshine.
- No rainfall.
- Afternoon humidity of 45 percent.
- No cloudy days.
- 5 mph wind (light breeze).



After crunching the numbers, we arrived at the 12 top cities for observing World Naked Gardening Day. At No. 1 was Miami.

Putting It Together

With those numbers in hand, we then needed to develop written content and images to make the data come to life.

For the written content, we conducted online research to unearth information about naked gardening, including quotes from the founder of World Naked Gardening Day. Then, to complement the data and the written narrative, we found photos of each of the top 12 cities, as well as tasteful safe-for-work pictures of nude gardeners.

We published the World Naked Gardening Day package a few days ahead of the observance to allow time for content promotion.



Telling the World About World Naked Gardening Day

At the core of the outreach strategy was contacting media outlets in the 12 ranked cities to tell them about the World Naked Gardening Day “honor” that had been bestowed upon their communities. We targeted newspapers, TV stations and radio stations in each market.

We hit the jackpot with our outreach in Miami. The city’s daily newspaper, the Miami Herald, published a story about the ranking. **That story simultaneously was posted online by the nearly 30 other daily newspapers** owned by the Miami Herald’s publisher, McClatchy.

HOME & GARDEN

Gardening in the nude? Nowhere better than Miami

By David J. Neal

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In all, **more than 120 media outlets reported on the ranking** of the best U.S. cities for observing World Naked Gardening Day. This included two live TV interviews on World Naked Gardening Day that I conducted with the Weather Channel.

Aside from the widespread media coverage, the LawnStarter blog post itself earned about **1,600 shares on social media**.

“The folks at the Weather Channel said it was their favorite story of the year.”

— LawnStarter ad

Harvesting the Fruits of Our Labor



After all was said and done, the World Naked Gardening Day project exceeded expectations, thanks to the dozens of backlinks and media mentions that were secured, as well as two coveted live spots on the Weather Channel.

“The ability to pull television and news coverage from a blog post is the epitome of scrappy marketing.”

— Sujan Patel, Inc.com

Furthermore, the World Naked Gardening Day campaign elicited citations in articles by Inc.com, Forbes.com and Keap.com.

SP: I’ve seen that you guys have gotten all kinds of press, like The Miami Herald and CNN, so you’re doing things that are not only scrappy, but things that get people’s attention.

I saw several pieces that earned you guys news spots, like [reporting on Austin’s population growth](#) in your blog, and pulling data from city demographers to do [comparisons on water bills across different counties](#) in Texas and Florida. Those all earned you a lot of news coverage, both online and on television.

RF: I can’t really take credit for that. One of the experts we did hire is our editor, [John Egan](#). He had done this type of thing with insurance and self-storage, and now lawn care. He’s amazed me in that he has turned our lawn care blog into something that’s being referenced as a news source.

Excerpt of Forbes.com interview with LawnStarter co-founder Ryan Farley

How Can You Get Naked?

So, what lessons can you take away from the World Naked Gardening Day initiative to create your own “naked” moment? Here are three suggestions.

1. Pay Attention to the News

What’s trending online? What’s trending on social media? Be a voracious consumer of information, looking for opportunities to pounce on a “newsjacking” opportunity. If you don’t want to spend hours a day scrolling through news feeds and social media feeds, set up Google news alerts for terms related to your industry.

2. Track What Works and What Doesn’t

Keep close tabs on your content marketing successes and failures. If something like the World Naked Gardening Day project succeeds, then repeat it when appropriate. Don’t ignore the failures, though. If a content marketing effort doesn’t fly, then figure out why it flopped, learn from the experience and move on.

3. Promote the Content, and Then Promote It Again

Content marketing initiatives will succeed only if you promote the content and keep promoting it. Conduct media outreach if need be, and make smart use of the right social media platforms. For instance, it made sense to promote the World Naked Gardening Day content on lively platforms like Facebook and Twitter, but not on a stodgier platform like LinkedIn.

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